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January 2026
AMW 182
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MONSTER ISSUE!
148 PAGES

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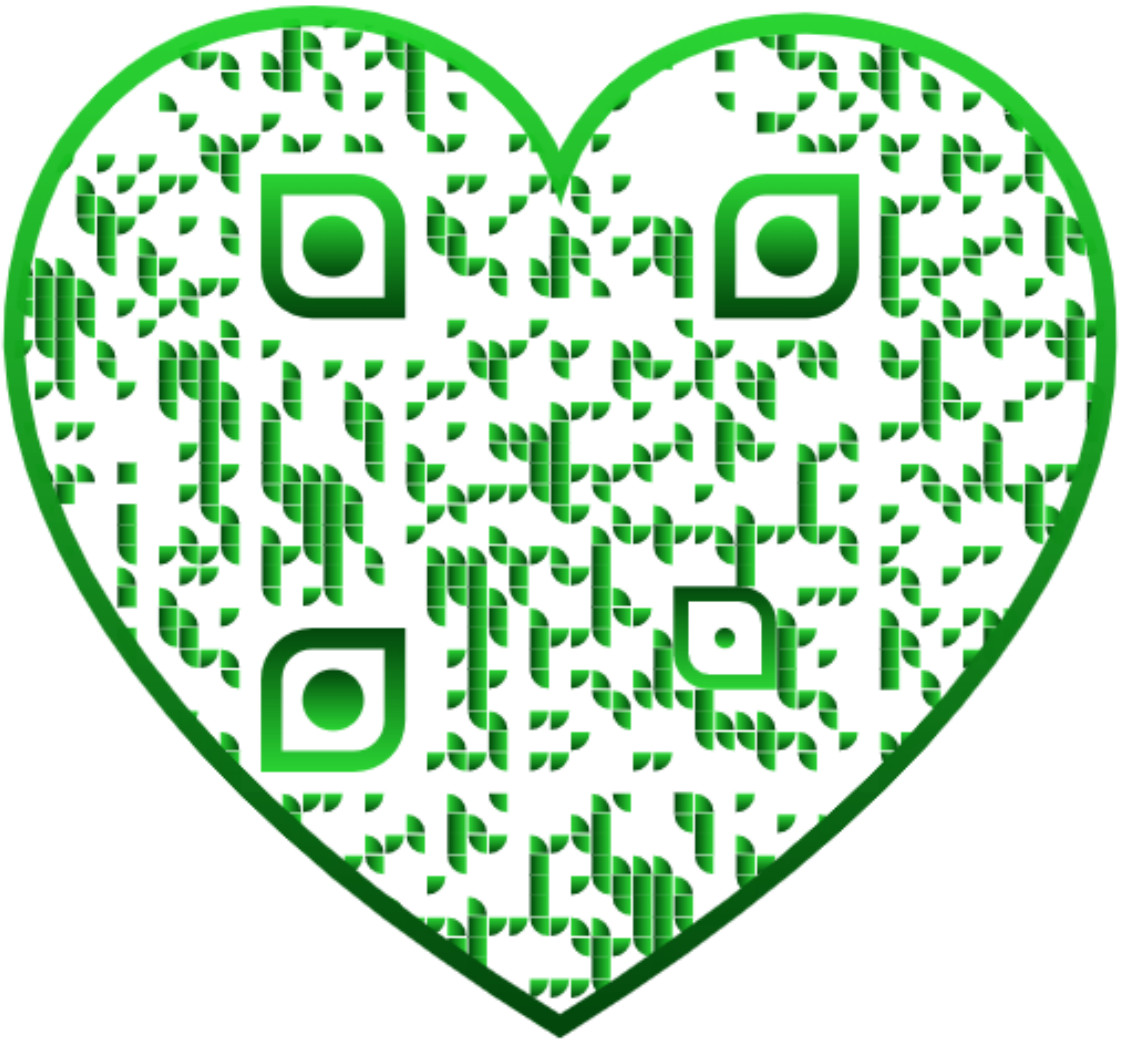

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WELCOME TO ISSUE 182

I hope you've all managed to recover from this year's Scale ModelWorld event. For the *AMW* team it was yet another exhilarating weekend, whether that was seeing all the new products on show, the huge number of models in the three main and competition halls, or the opportunity to speak with as many modellers and industry contacts as possible. One of the more interesting sets of conversations revolved around how increasingly there's a push for more aftermarket in magazines, yet there's a significant proportion of you out there who use just what's in the box. While we do hold to the latter theme with the likes of exclusive builds and back to basics articles, we'll be looking to feature more out-of-the-box builds in future – but rest assured, there'll still be plenty for those who enjoy aftermarket products or scratch-building.

Speaking of exclusives, get ready for Airfix's recently announced 1/24 Messerschmitt Bf 109G-5/G-6, which we cover in depth in a bigger-than-usual issue, along with a history and colour profiles. Shoehorning as broad a range of subjects into an issue can be challenging, but this month there's everything from dinosaurs to space ships, in the shape of X-Plus' 1/8 Blue and Beta (*Jurassic World: Dominion*) and Polar Lights' 1/350 USS *Grissom (Star Trek II)*. These are joined by Heller's new-tool 1/72 E-2C Hawkeye and Clear Prop's 1/72 DH.88 racer, while Special Hobby's 1/72 Mirage F1 in Tigermeet livery is best read while wearing sunglasses! Military modellers aren't left out, though, as ICM's 1/35 FWD Ammunition Truck shows how to replicate a tricky World War One camouflage.

We've recently had several readers send in full build articles 'on spec' so to speak, but unfortunately, we haven't been able to use them as they weren't to our particular style. If you'd like to become an *AMW* build contributor, please drop me a line at the email address below before you start your build. That way I can provide you with the relevant details and so hopefully, we will get to publish your amazing work.

Enjoy this bumper issue!

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Printed by: Acorn Web Offset Ltd, Normanton, UK.

Distributed by: Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PP
Tel: 020 7429 4000.
Airfix Model World, ISSN 2045-1202 (USPS 4440), is published monthly by Key Publishing Ltd, PO Box 300, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1NA, UK.

The US annual subscription price is $72.99. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container INC 150-15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.

Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn NY 11256.

US Postmaster: Send address changes to *Airfix Model World*, Air Business Ltd, c/o World Container INC 150-15, 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.

Subscription records are maintained at Key Publishing Ltd, PO Box 300, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1NA, UK.

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abc The average sale for the period Jan-Dec 2024 was **11,754** print and digital copies monthly

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WIN

Turn to page 90 for your chance to win one of three Airfix 1/24 Messerschmitt Bf 109G-5/G-6 kits, with a combined prize pot of £300.

SCALE MODELWORLD 2025

IF YOU were to judge Scale ModelWorld 2025 solely on the surprise announcements and releases on show, then this year's event was surely a success - although there is much, much more to this annual event. Airfix got in early with a pre-show reveal of a new-tool 1/24 Bf 109G-5/G-6 (see p10 and p72), followed by Anderson Entertainment divulging the contents of its second *Thunderbirds* model set (see p12) and Revell's newly released 1/32 Meteor (built in *AMW*181, Dec 2025) plus new-tool 1/24 Lamborghini Revuelto and McLaren 750 supercars.

▲ **Konstantinos Dimitriadi won Best In Show and a host of other awards with his exquisitely detailed 1/48 Hellenic F-4E AUP Phantom, adding self-designed and created 3D-printed resin extras along with numerous scratch-built items.**

Trade news

Revell previewed new versions of its 1/32 Me 262a and Hunter kits, which will depict an A-1a/U4 'bomber destroyer' and T7 two-seat trainer respectively, plus a 1/72 F-15C Eagle. These will be joined by a fresh 1/25 Ford Mustang GT 2024 in its 'Click System' range. If you're a World of Warcraft fan, then the imminent arrival of Revell's Lich King and Thrall the Orc are sure to delight; both are 1/16 and will be in Gift Set format.

Bachmann may not have made any announcements, but there were several surprises on the stand, including Trumpeter's new-tool 1/48 Buccaneer S.2D (details are scarce but a test shot was on show) and an Academy 1/144 B-2 Spirit. There was also a built model of the Trumpeter 1/700 HMS *Queen Elizabeth* aircraft carrier, which comes with a pre-painted deck and lifts.

Anderson Entertainment had copies of its newly in-stock Thunderbirds Set 1 (see News, AMW178, Sep 2025) on the stand, retailing for £79.99, and unveiled its second combo-package: Thunderbird 2 Heavy Rescue. This features a 1/500 Thunderbird 2 plus 1/144 Firefly and Excavators and is available for pre-order direct from https://gerryanderson.com, priced £49.99. Watch out for builds of both sets in future issues.

Newcomer firm DBMK has suffered delays to its projects due to the war in Ukraine, where the kits are being moulded, but it's 1/32 de Havilland Hornet F.3 and Hawker Sea Fury are now expected to be released in late February 2026. The same-scale AW Sea Hawk is a longer-term project but looks equally impressive.

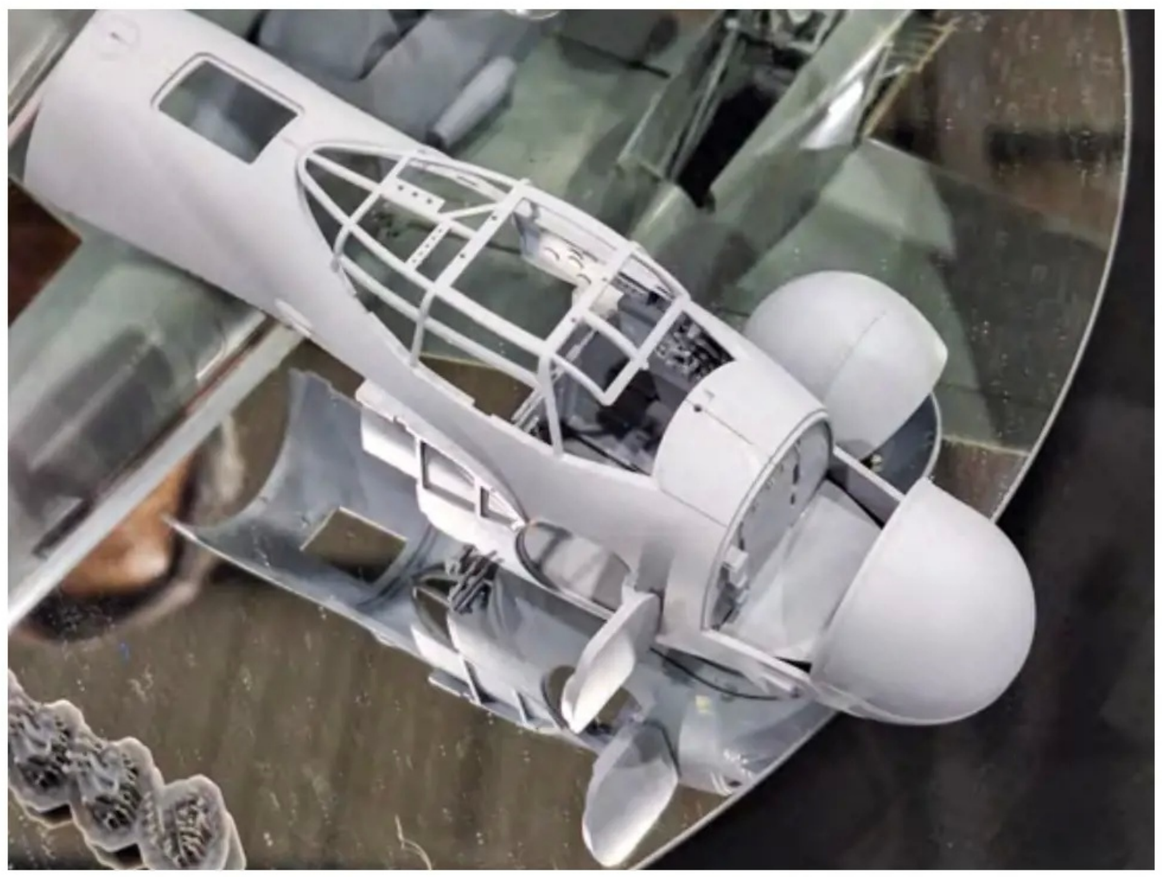
HK Models has reworked its 1/32 Mosquito tooling to bring us stunning examples of the Highball 'bouncing bomb' and night-fighter variants, which should be release in February-March next year. We can't wait! Stunningly detailed 3D-printed resin details are being developed for both kits.

Models on show

The annual competition was again well served, with Konstantinos Dimitriadis awarded the Best In Show accolade for his heavily reworked Zoukei-Mura 1/48 F-4E (late), which he converted to a Greek Air Force F-4E AUP airframe. Laurin Gasser from IPMS Switzerland won the Junior Best In Show prize for his superbly painted Alpine Miniatures 'First in Bastogne' US Army figure.

While the competition is one of the standout elements at Scale ModelWorld, there was just as much quality on display within the main three halls, which featured clubs and special interest groups from the UK and overseas. These tables were positively buzzing all weekend, as questions were asked and discussions had about what was on show or how an effect was achieved. It was also somewhat comforting to see the many hauling bags full of kits, accessories, decals and sundries away at the end of each day, and we're already looking forward to the wonderful builds that will surely follow over the next year. A selection of club builds from the show follows.

Stu Fone and Chris Clifford



▲ This year's Junior Best In Show went to Laurin Gasser for his 4th Armored Division, US Army soldier during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944.

▲ This beautifully finished Academy 1/32 F/A-18C Hornet was built by Hinckley IPMS member Simon Mepstead in the markings of VFA-195 'Dambusters'. The markings are of the squadron's Carrier Air Group commander's airframe, adorned with the unit's striking eagle's head insignia, plus its *Chippy Ho!* nickname.

▲ Steve Winter, a member of IPMS South Somerset, is an aircraft restorer at Yeovilton. Flexing his creative muscles, he wanted to give Kōtare's 1/32 Spitfire Mk.I a different look. He certainly achieved it with this effort, portraying RJ Mitchell's finest in bare metal and primer. The model was riveted – and the wooden propeller was especially convincing.

▲ Modelling doesn't have to be just about creating accurate replicas with masses of weathering and extra goodies. Sometimes it's a great way of having fun with a subject, such as this 1/48 Hawker Typhoon on the East Neuk stand by Bruce Pert, which wears Tunnocks Tea Cakes wrappers, making it a Tunnocks T-phoon.

▲ An eyecatching model on the Road and Track In Scale table was Simon Tarr's stunning 1/24 marriage of Tamiya's Porsche 911 and a Hobby Design upgrade. It replicates a real car transformed by Akira Nakai's Japanese tuning firm RAUH-Welt BEGRIFF (RWB).

▲ Simond Lind's 1/72 Blohm und Voss Ha 139 was a standout exhibit on the Civil Aviation Special Interest Group's table. It was a much-modified Mach 2 kit with homemade decals.

▲ There was no missing James Smith's dazzling Airfix 1/72 Jet Provost T.4 on the Poole Scale Modellers display. It was finished as a Central Flying School 'Red Pelicans' aircraft, stationed at Little Rissington, Gloucestershire, in 1965.

▲ Airfix's original, vintage 1/72 Lancaster received a Blackbird Models conversion and a wealth of extra scratch-building and detail to replicate an Avro Lincoln. The builder, Colin Tovey of IPMS Stafford, mixed and matched different clear parts from the kit, self-printed the serials and even – ingeniously – employed parts of a Pepsi Cola bottle to create the under-fuselage radar fairing.

▲ Staffordshire Moorlands modeller Robert Mountford added extra detail to his Airfix 1/48 Fairey Gannet AS.1, notably in the engine bay, wing folds and cockpit.

▲ 'Midnight Ambush' by Michael Gray was an original work created in response to a club 'coffee coaster' challenge, kit-bashing several Games Workshop and fantasy items for this sci-fi/fantasy-style scene.

NEW FROM AIRFIX

IT'S BEEN another bumper month of releases from Airfix, with the surprise announcement of a new-tool 1/24 Bf 109G-5/G-6 (A17002, £99.99; **see page 72 for a full build of this latest 'superkit'**) coming hard on the heels of its new-tool 1/48 Spitfire Mk.IXe (A05144, £29.99). The latter was described and built in *AMW180* in November 2025, but is now available in the shops, with schemes for RAF, Danish and Belgian airframes.

Staying on a Spitfire theme, the firm's lovely 1/48 PR.XIX (A05119A, £29.99) has been reissued for the first time. The parts are unchanged, but new markings are included for three post-war machines. These include a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight airframe, which was used in air combat trials with RAF Lightnings in 1963.

Vintage Classics are always popular, appealing to modellers seeking nostalgia builds and catering for subjects not covered in current release schedules. The most recent pair is a prime example, being the 1/72 Westland Puma HC.1 (A03021V, £15.99) and Lockheed Hudson (A03006V, £15.99). Both of these come with the same markings schemes as the original boxings in 1973 and 1963, respectively.

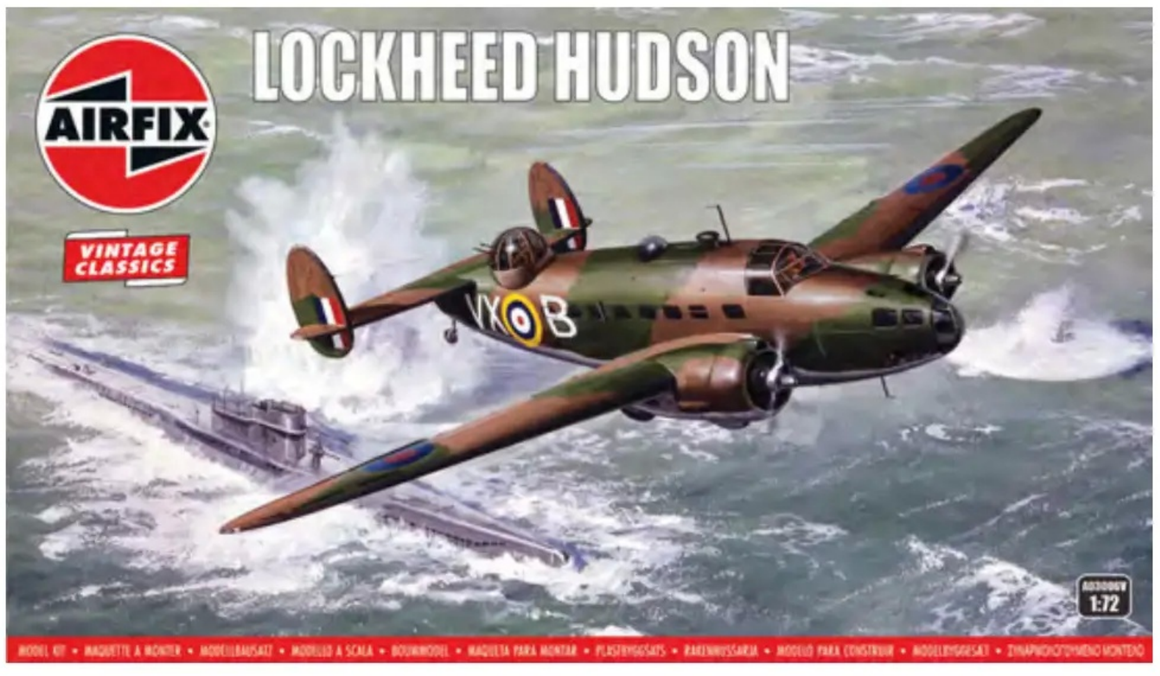
Military subjects also feature this month, including a 1/48 World War Two 15-cwt GS Truck (A03313A, £17.99), which comes with markings for British Army and RAF vehicles. It's a reissuing of the 2014 Bedford MWD and has a great level of detail considering the scale. From a smaller-scale perspective, Airfix has completed its 1/72 Cold War/Land Rover quartet with the final pair of kits comprising the Land Rover 1 Tonne FC Truck (A02331, £11.99) and LWB Land Rover and Trailer (A02324, £11.99). While ideal as models in their own right, these have great diorama potential as they can be used alongside September's 4-Ton 4x4 GS Truck (A02326A) and 105mm Light Field Gun (A02332), either posed together or in convoy/transit. As the new kits comprise just three styrene runners (including one frame for the windows), they are great products for beginners and would make for a great gift for either youngsters or die-hard Land Rover fans.

Last, but by no means least, comes the returning 1/144 Space Shuttle (A50200, £49.99) in Gift Set format, which includes Poly Cement, brushes and pots of Humbrol acrylic paint. This is a straightforward reissue of the classic 1978 kit, but with markings to allow you to build one of seven options, covering all six orbiters (Enterprise, Columbia, Discovery, Atlantis, Challenger and Endeavour) built between 1976 and 2011.

For more on these and other Airfix releases, visit https://uk.airfix.com

Scan here for more an in-depth preview of Airfix's latest 1/24 superkit, the Messerschmitt Bf 109G-5/G-6

SCAN TO ENTER



ICM ISSUES 1/32 NEW-TOOL HENSCHEL HS 123 BOXINGS

UKRAINE'S ICM has earned an enviable reputation for producing quality biplane kits in 1/32 scale. This genre has just grown with the release of two Henschel Hs 123 boxings, replicating slightly different sub-types.

All the supremely neat moulding that's now a strong hallmark of ICM styrene is apparent. The radial powerplant is crisply rendered and comprises main halves, plus a separate, one-piece valve pushrod assembly, a full manifold and exhaust array (with hollowed ends) and the type's triform cowling bracing. The cockpit is reasonably well appointed, having a rear bulkhead, a bucket seat with separate mounting frames, a rudder bar and pedals, plus a control column. Also provided are two separate instrument panels with raised and recessed moulding, a gun sight and sidewall fixtures.

Overall panel line engraving is to the ICM's usual incredibly neat standard, while cooling louvres on the gun cowling and forward fuselage also look good. External refinement extends to individual control linkages for the separate elevators. Trailing edges of the one-piece interplane struts are impressively fine. Another pleasing option is to have fully spatted main undercarriage legs or fitting just the upper 'trousers'. Note that the undercarriage legs are well detailed, with rubber oleo gaiters being moulded integrally.

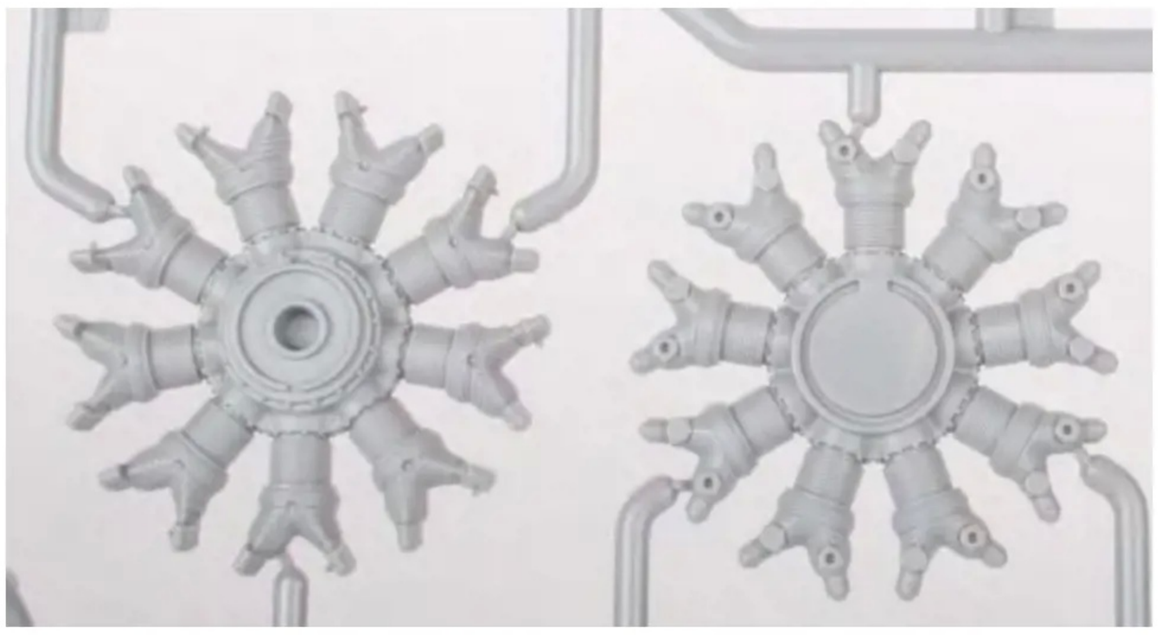
Stores supplied

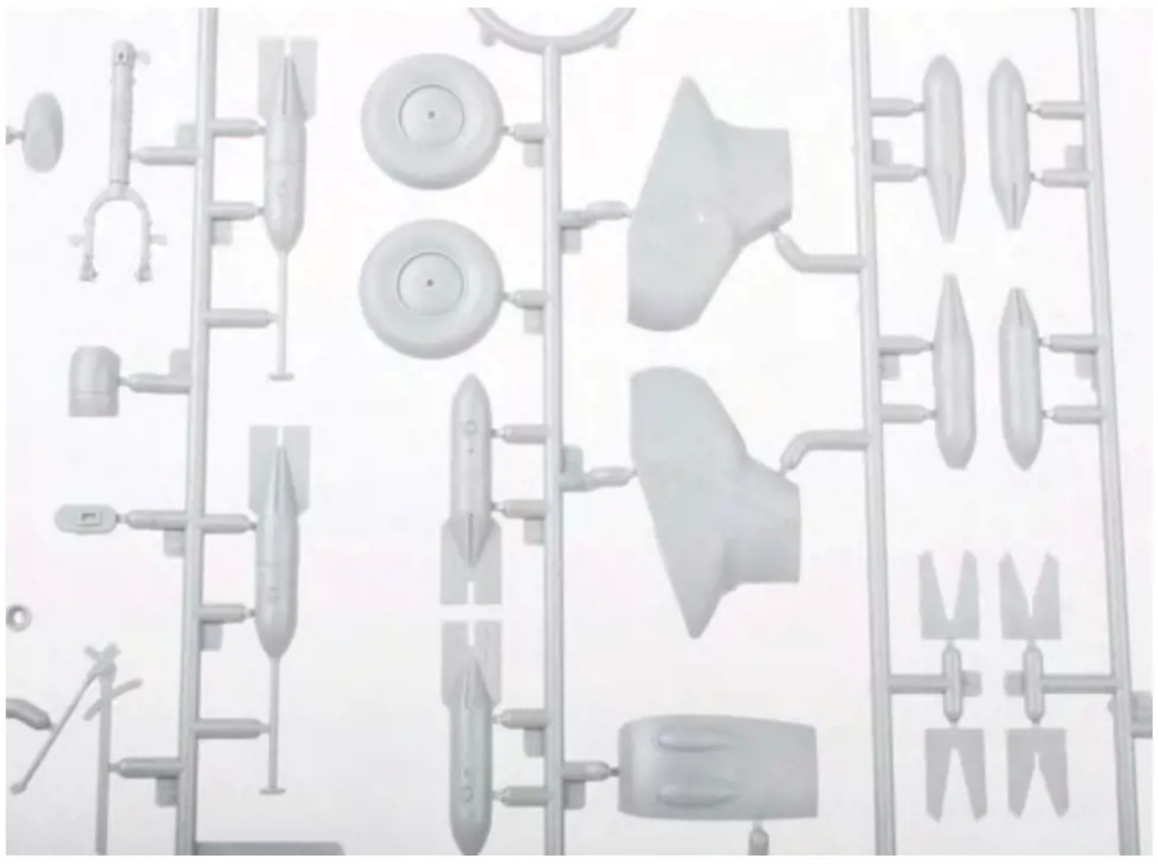
A centreline fuel tank is included, as are 50kg bombs with and without fuze-extenders, plus attendant racks for the wing undersides. The main differences between the Hs 123A-1 (late) and 123A Condor Legion involve differently profiled aileron mounting strips and dissimilar tailwheel arrangements.

Boxing 32015 Hs 123A-1 (late) comes with decals for four Luftwaffe airframes. The first machine, with pre-war, three-tone splinter pattern on the upper wing and later two-colour splinter on the fuselage, also has fetching green and white chevron and bar décor on the upper surfaces. Another airframe is similar, but has just a one-colour fuselage, plus yellow theatre marking. There's also an Eastern Front winter whitewash example.

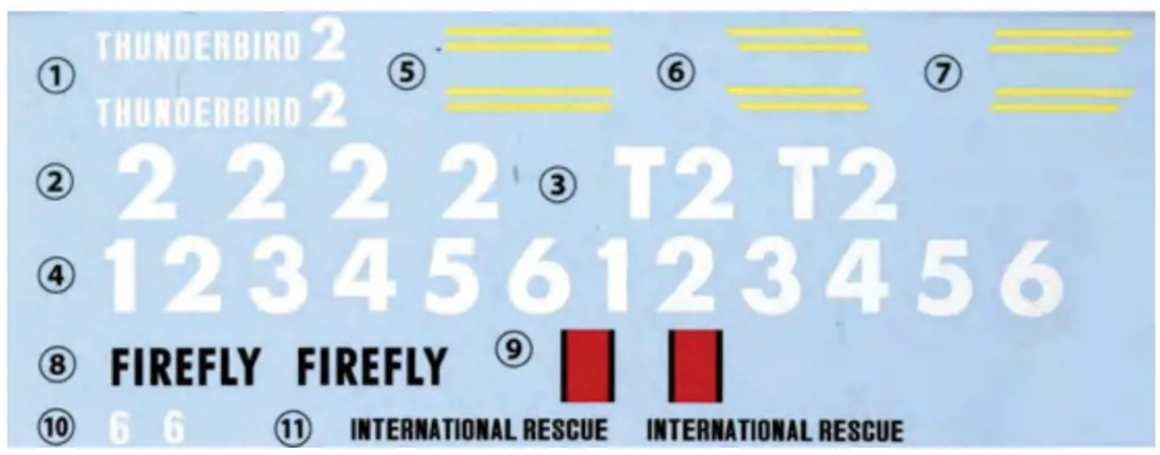
The second kit, 32016, focuses on the Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War and offers schemes for three machines, all painted with differing splinter patterns. Decals for both kits are well printed on gloss carrier film and have good colour density, even if they are slightly thick. Swastikas are segmented, as is common these days.

These Hs 123s are splendid and the type is especially attractive if you fancy tackling a characterful biplane without extensive rigging. More information is available from the UK importer, The Hobby Company (www.hobbyco.net). Bravo ICM!





ANDERSON ENTERTAINMENT ANNOUCES SECOND *THUNDERBIRDS* SET



HOT ON the heels of its initial *Thunderbirds* set (see *News, AMW*178, September 2025), Anderson Entertainment revealed a new multi-kit package at this year's IPMS(UK) Nationals, held at the Telford International Centre.

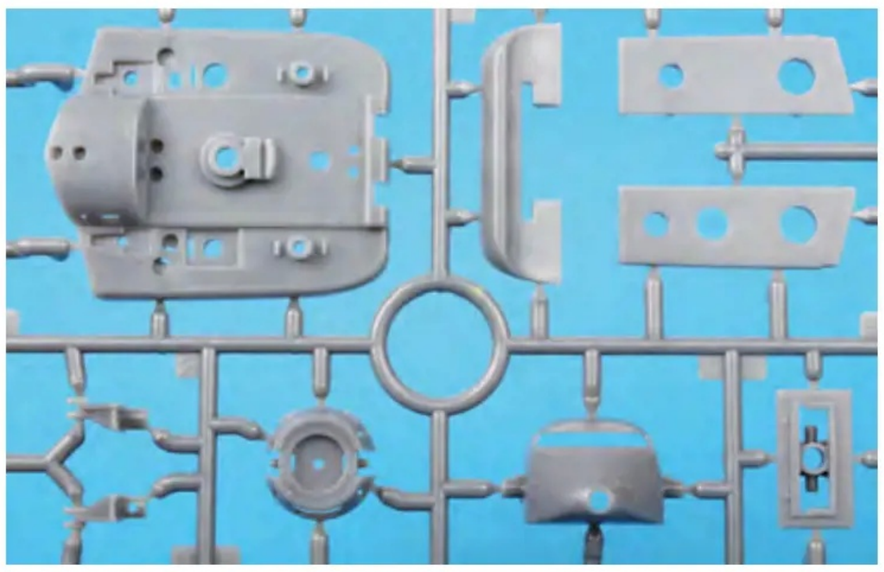
This new product, Thunderbird 2 Heavy Rescue, again features three kits... although the test-shot seen by *AMW* differs from Set 1 in that most styrene parts are dark grey, rather than coloured, with just a single red runner. The clear and vinyl frames (two examples of the latter are included as two vehicles are tracked) are common to all *Thunderbirds* sets, but the rest is new tooling.

The first kit is the titular Thunderbird 2, this being 1/500 and can be built in two modes: cargo loading/unloading (complete with extended legs) and airborne/landed. Firefly, a heavy bulldozer and firefighting vehicle is next, this was first seen in the episode *City of Fire*, and the kit is 1/144 (the same scale as the Elevator Car in Set 1). This is a tracked vehicle and the dozer blade is moveable. Last, but by no means least is the Excavator, which is a debris-clearance machine – it appeared in just one episode, *Martian Invasion* – and is also 1/144. Similar to Firefly, the main rock-cutting assembly can be raised or lowered accordingly.

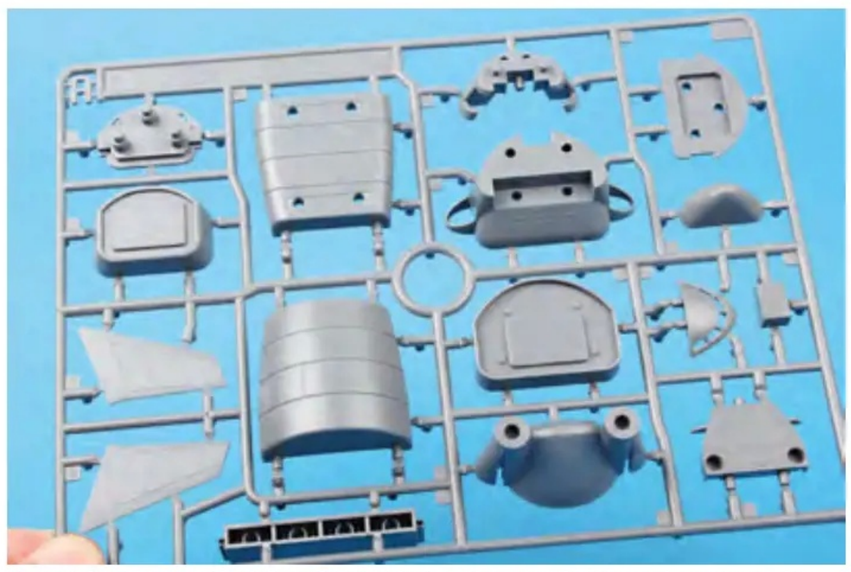
Clever design means much of the painting can be done without masking; an example of this is Firefly, which has separate nose and rear sections, with a narrow intermediate piece that's inserted between them, which aligns with the vehicle's red and black striped section. It's a similar case with the turret, which has inserts for the striped areas. All kits can be built without the need for glue and – if the production examples match the way the first set had pre-coloured parts – minimal painting will be needed.

Decals are supplied for all three vehicles, but note that – as with the first set – these are printed on a single sheet of carrier film, and each item must be cut out before it can be applied to the models. Printing is first-rate, with crisp demarcations, while the opacity is excellent, notably on the white elements.

Anderson Entertainment's Thunderbird 2 Heavy Rescue set is due to be released in spring 2026, but is available for pre-order from the firm's website (https://gerryanderson.com), with an RRP of £49.99.



▲ Firefly's segmented hull and turret will ease masking requirement – note the robust attachments for a 'snap-fit' style construction.



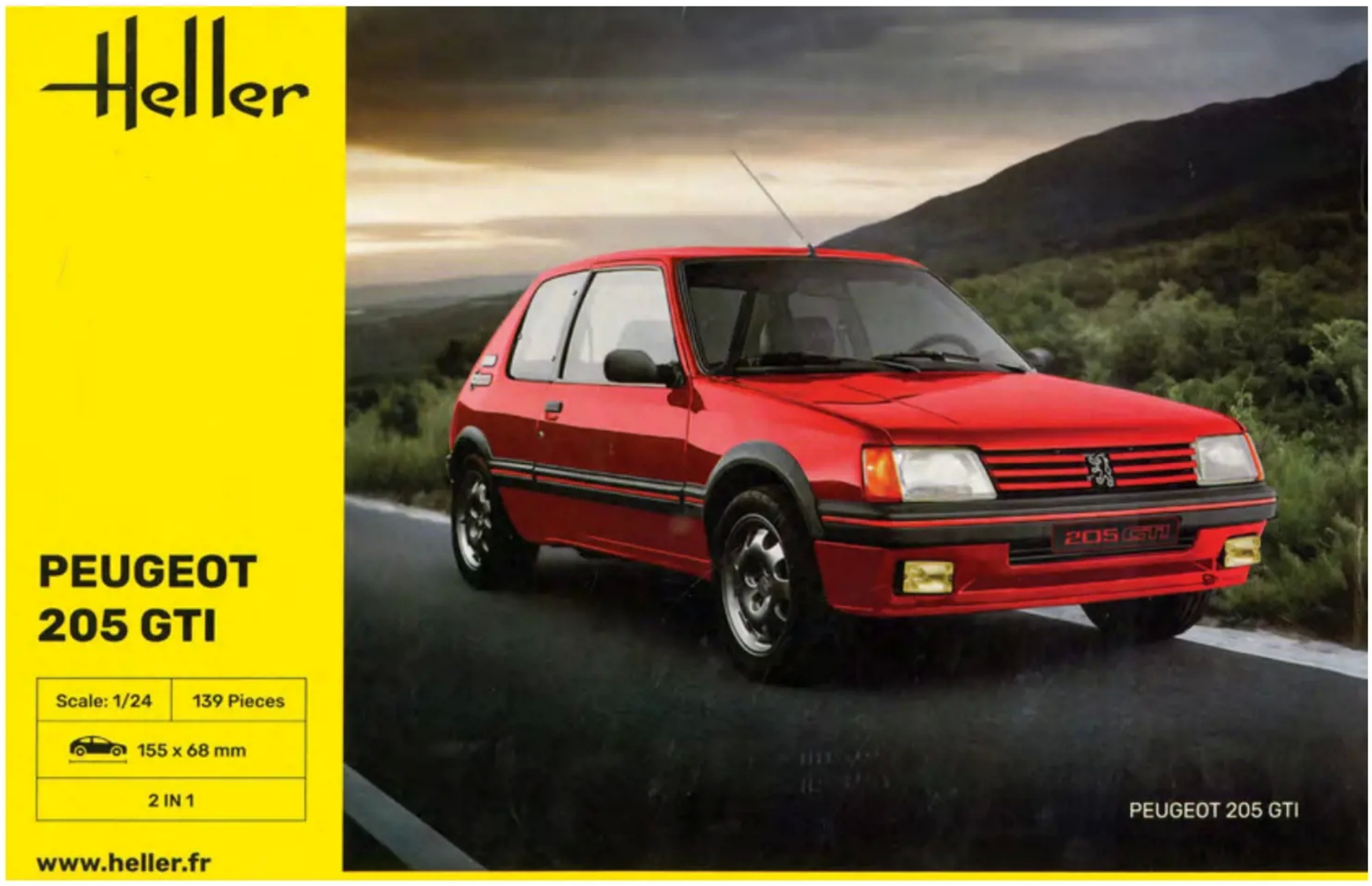
▲ While Thunderbird 2's paint scheme is the simplest, it's the more complex of the three to build, with a separate cargo pod.

HI-HO SILVER! – MISSING TEXT

LAST MONTH'S Airfix 1/24 P-51D build was unfortunately missing several lines of text at the top of the third column on the second page. The missing lines (in italics) are:

However, there is only so much that can be corrected on a kit, so the seat was employed unaltered. The colour used inside the cockpit was a mix of two parts XF-3 Yellow and one part XF-5 Green, which is the blend recommended for the Interior Green by Tamiya for its own P-51D; I had used it on a previous build and found that it matched the colour well. The side panels had various electrical boxes and control levers picked out in black, red or silver according to references, while a combination of dry-brushing and pastel washes simulated shadows and highlights as appropriate. This approach was also used on the control column and its canvas gaiter, plus the oxygen hose.

HELLER'S NEW-TOOL 1/24 PEUGEOT 205 GTI



FOR SOME, the mere mention of the initials 'GTI' are enough for misty-eyed recollections of the 1980s and 1990s 'hot' hatchbacks. Many manufacturers produced these higher-performance car models, in Peugeot's case the 205 GTI, which is the subject of Heller's latest 1/24 tooling. Comprising five styrene runners plus polycaps, five vinyl tyres, a separate bodyshell and two self-adhesive polished metal components for the wing mirrors, this kit replicates the 1.9-lit GTI and can be built in either left- or right-hand drive configuration.

The hatchback may be moulded shut, but the two doors and bonnet are separate and can all be posed open/closed and there's plenty of detail included should you wish to opt for the former. There's a decent four-cylinder engine for under the bonnet, although purists will want to add pipework and cabling, and the front wheels can be turned and all four can be rotated, thanks to the use of polycaps. The interior is well appointed, with the seats including headrests, while decals are used to detail the dashboard. One notable absence – seatbelts – hints at this being an early model, possibly even from 1986, although such items were mandatory in the UK at that time.

Heller supplies masking templates for the windows, which can either be cut direct from the instructions or transferred onto tape. The splendid decal set supplies registrations for ten European and Middle Eastern vehicles, along with a rear windscreen heater, bodyshell trim, company and vehicle model logos/legends, plus items replicating the seat colours and piping. Heller's 1/24 Peugeot 205 GTI fills a notable gap in the car kit market for a roadworthy version of this type and is priced €34.99, direct from www.heller.fr and most good model shops in the UK.

TABLETOP WORKSHOP RETURNS WITH NEW PRODUCTS

Wargaming company The Tabletop Workshop has recently been relaunched under new ownership and, along with re-issues of earlier products, it has released several fresh products, which are available in 1/72 and 1/100 scales, along with 28mm scenic items.

Two new sets each contain four vehicles, so enough for a troop. The first is of the Mark II Matilda (TW20V2001, £24.95); this is 1/72 and comprises four identical runners, each containing 30 hard-styrene parts. While the detail may not be to the IBG Models level, it's still pleasing and will pass muster in this small scale. Four sets of markings are included, for a total of 16 vehicles, covering the British Expeditionary Force in 1940, Royal Armoured Corps in 1941, 1st Armoured Division in 1941 and Soviet Red Army machines in 1943. The decals are well printed and would benefit from being applied to a gloss surface.

Although produced to a smaller scale (15mm or 1/100), the Mk.II/IV Humber set (TW15V2002, £24.95) is similarly impressive, with one vehicle per runner, but with an option to build either the Mk.II or Mk.IV variant. Decals are supplied for four vehicles each from 7th Armoured Division in North Africa and 11th Armoured Division in Normandy, 1944.

The Medieval Chapel (28MEDCHAP, £20.99) comes in 1/56 scale, and is a clip-together kit, comprising just seven parts: four for the walls, two for the roof and a single baseplate. Windows and doors are moulded integrally with the walls and there's a convincing stonework representation – the inner sides are just as good and these even have benches. The floor is yet another surface made from stones, and while the 'mortar' spaces are quite broad, they should look convincing once painted. The tiled roof is similarly impressive.

The Tabletop Workshop will soon be releasing sets of the US Army M10 Tank Destroyer in both scales. More on these and other new releases is available at thetabletopworkshop.co.uk/

DISPLAY CASE

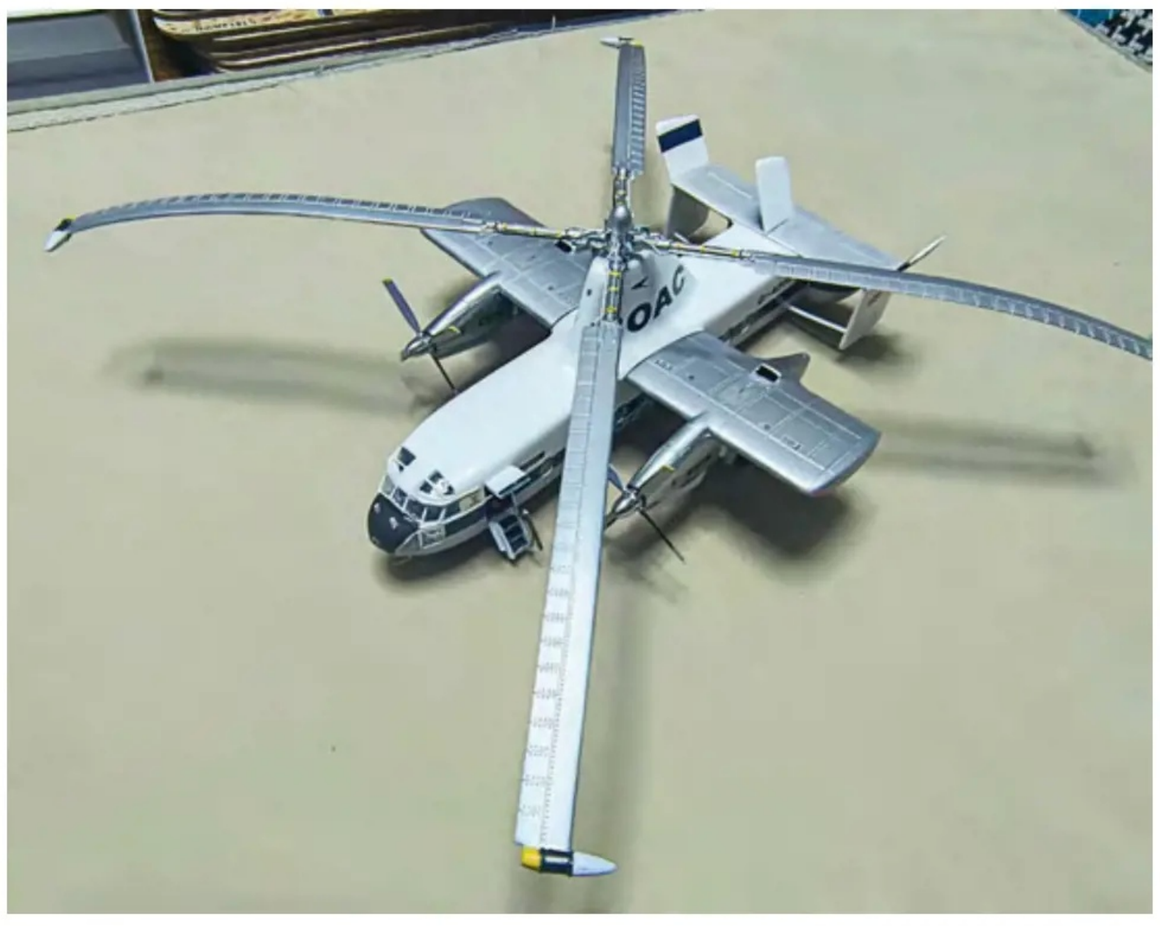
Whether you paint with a brush or spray your models, vivid colour schemes make for eye-catching subjects, as seen here on this month's selection of readers' builds.

▲ Pietro Caltabiano recently completed a stunning build of Italeri's (ex-Protar) 1/9 Norton Commando as the machine ridden by Peter Williams in the 1970 750cc Production TT race. He added extra detail using 3D-printed parts and scratch-building, while decals were bespoke for this build, being printed at home.

▶ Rob Cousin brush-painted his latest Airfix build, of a desert-camouflaged 1/72 Bf 109E, using Vallejo acrylics, finding the kit's decals easy to use

▼ MiniArt's 1/35 LGOC B-Type London Omnibus served as the main focal point on David Clay's street-scene diorama. Various MiniArt figures were used for the pedestrians, street workers and musicians, while the cobbled surface was created from individual Plaster of Paris stones. Tamiya paints were employed for all aspects of the project.

▲ Stephen Booth built Amusing Hobby's 1/35 Centurion Mk.V as a vehicle that had just returned from an exercise, attempting to replicate restrained weathering on a parade gloss 'look'. He found that the kit tracks were rather flimsy, but the biggest challenge was the lack of a canvas mantlet cover (even though its depicted on the box artwork). His solution was to modify a spare AFV Club item. The rest of the build was essentially out of the box, apart from Eureka tow cables, which replaced their styrene alternatives. Painting and weathering was achieved using Vallejo and AMMO products.



▶ Revell's 1/78 Fairey Rotodyne – first released in 1960 – builds into an impressively large model, as Steve Kaz discovered when he completed his with a British Overseas Airways Corporation 'what-if' livery.

Thomas Lundgren offers his take on a Royal Danish Air Force Spitfire Mk.IXe, serial 41-421, but relying on the ICM kit rather than Airfix's recent release. It depicts the airframe as it appeared in 1951 when operated by Eskadrille 725, with oversized wing roundels and the original RAF 'A' colour scheme (the Danish insignia colours simply being painted over the RAF tones). The cockpit was embellished with Eduard photo-etched metal items, plus resin exhausts and wheels, while the kit's cannon fairings were replaced by Master Model's turned brass versions. Xtracolor paint shades were used for the camouflage, while the markings were sourced from Danish firm Stoppel Decals.

Richard Butler decided upon a 'what-if' build of the Revell 1/144 James Bond 007 Moonraker 6 kit (which is possibly the modelling equivalent of a cinematic fourth wall-break?). His approach was to ask what would have happened if that film's villain, Hugo Drax, had succeeded in his evil plans, portraying Moonraker 6 as it returned to Earth with passengers to repopulate the planet. The interior – including bulkheads, front and rear toilets, deck hatches and stowage, plus passenger seats and galley – was scratch-built, the design being based loosely on Rockwell's blueprints for a 74-seat passenger module, which could be fitted to the NASA Space Shuttle Orbiter.

Revell's 1/24 Revell Volkswagen T1 Samba Bus served as something of a test-bed for Ewe Gen Lim, thanks to one or two broken parts and his first custom attempt at a suitably 1960s psychedelic appearance. He enjoyed the kit's overall level of detail, notably concerning the engine and interior, while the option of having any/all of the doors open was welcomed... although not employed here.

Submit YOUR project!

Want to feature your recently finished project in *AMW*? Send us a high-quality photo of your model against a white background and tell us about any aftermarket products or special techniques to: stuart.fone@keypublishing.com

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Eye in the Sky

Garry Tobiss tackles a colourful US Navy subject in Heller's new-tool Grumman E-2C Hawkeye

MODEL SPEC

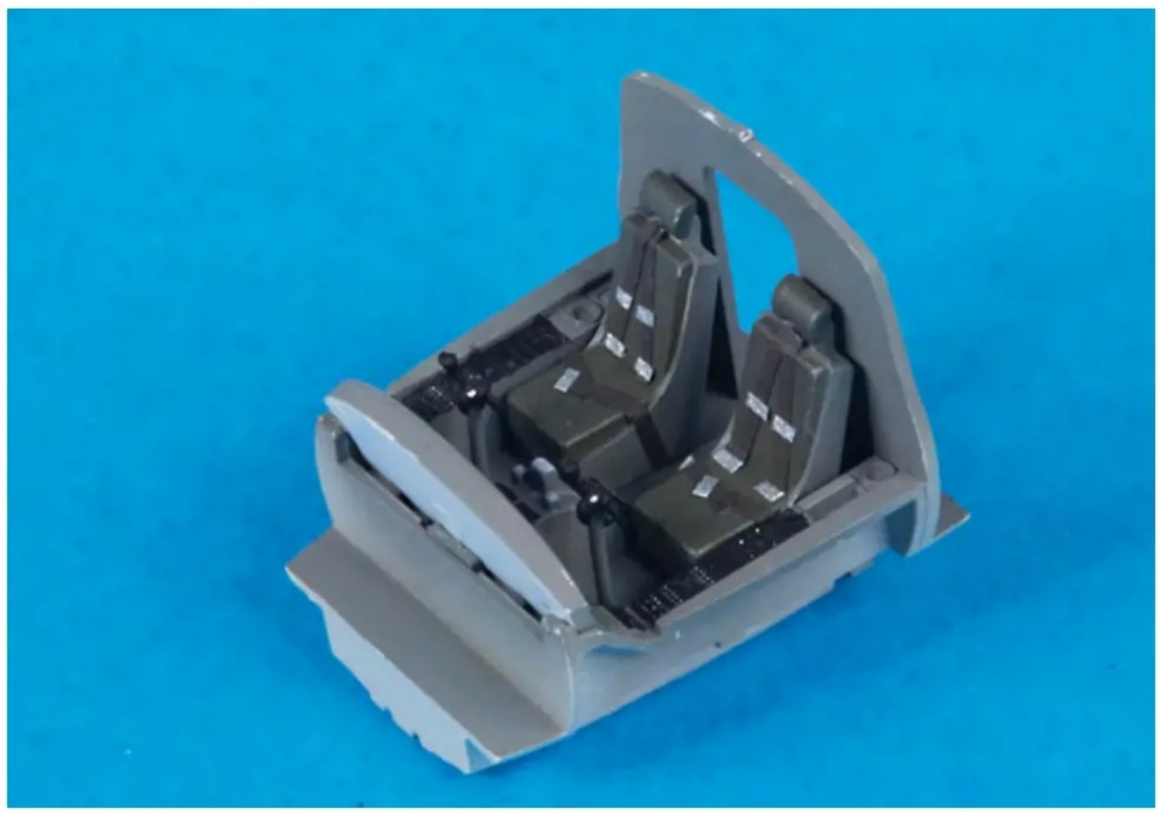
Grumman E-2C Hawkeye
By: Heller
Stock Code: 82300
Scale: 1/72
Price: €49.99
Available from:
Heller (https://heller.fr)

▲ These were the parts for the cockpit and nosewheel bay and undercarriage leg. The latter proved troublesome and was broken at least twice later in the build.

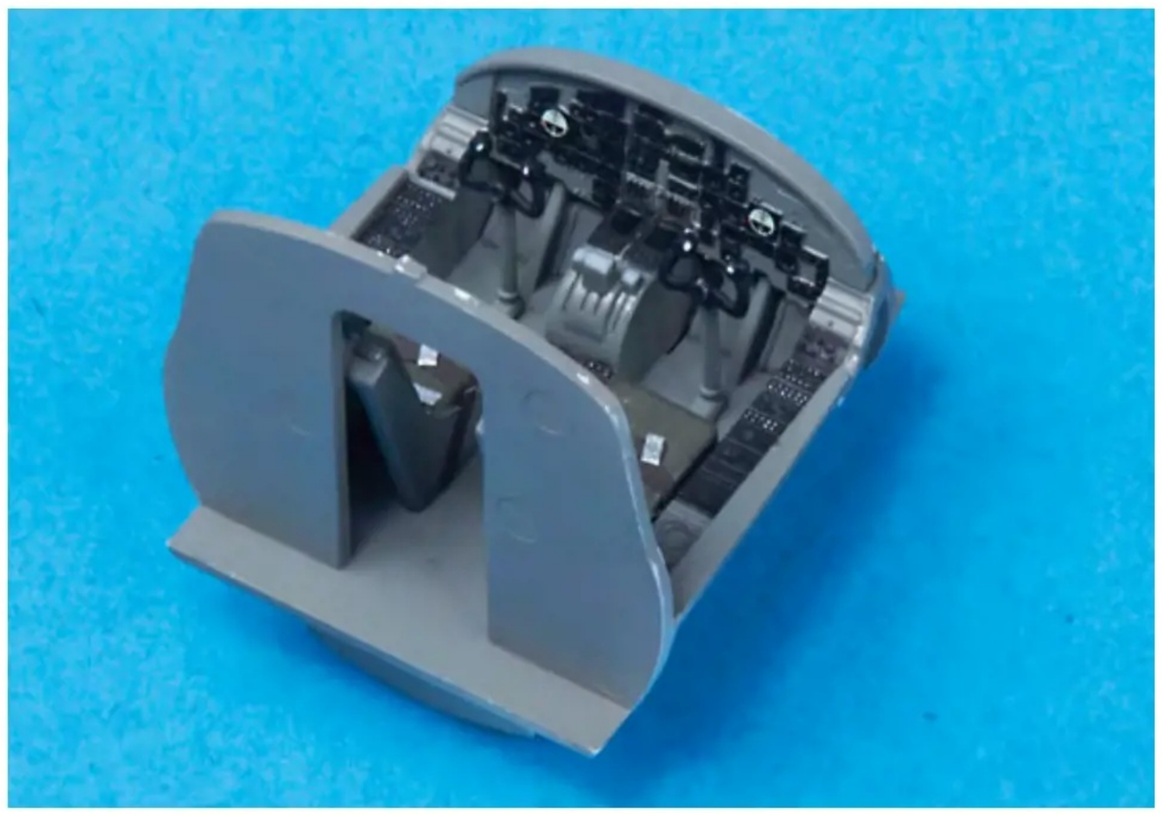
In various upgraded forms, Grumman's E-2 Hawkeye has been operated by the US Navy as an airborne early warning and command/control platform since 1964... its fuselage-mounted rotating radome being instantly recognisable. Hawkeye has been the only carrier-borne early warning aircraft in operational service for more than 60 years, with a Chinese equivalent (which appears remarkably similar in design) expected to become operational in late 2025. The most well-known Hawkeye variant, the E-2C, has been updated repeatedly during its service life, which began in 1973, although it is currently being replaced by the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye. The type also found export success with airframes being purchased by Egypt, France, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Singapore and the Republic of China (Taiwan).

Eyes of the fleet

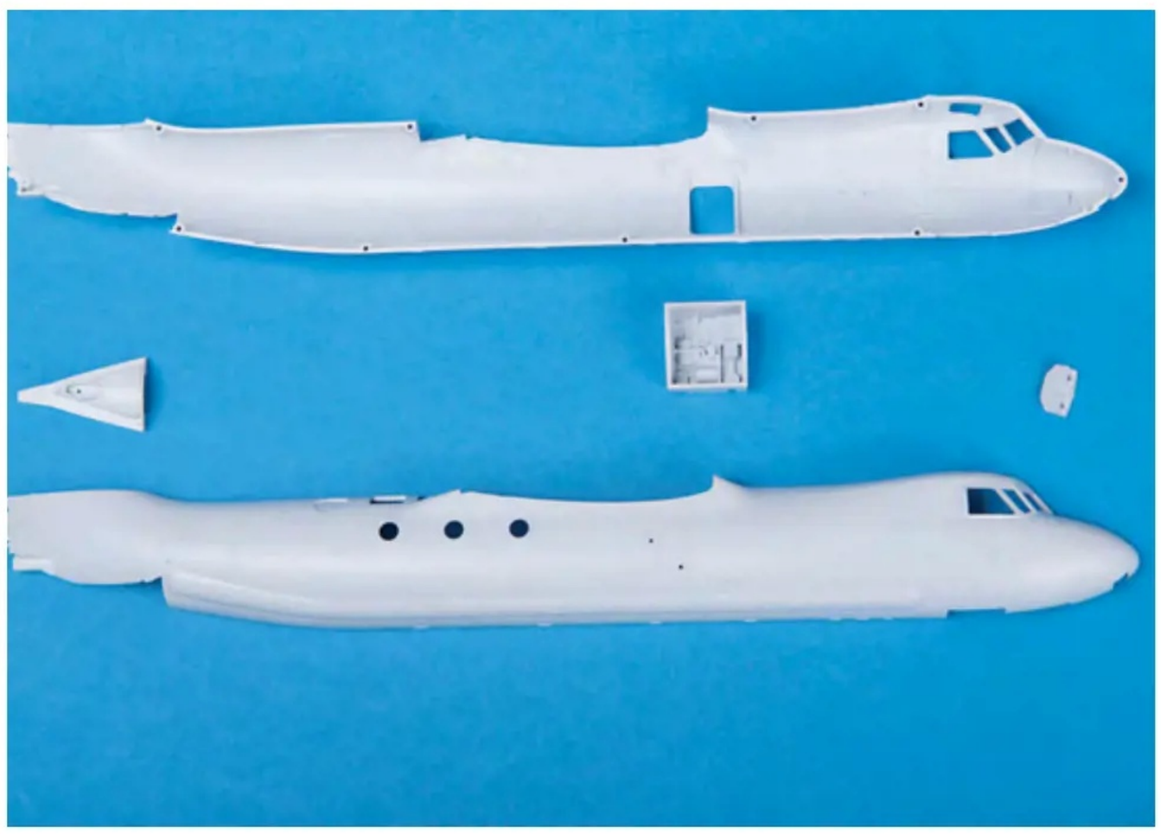
This kit was reviewed in the *AMW* August 2025 issue, with in-depth



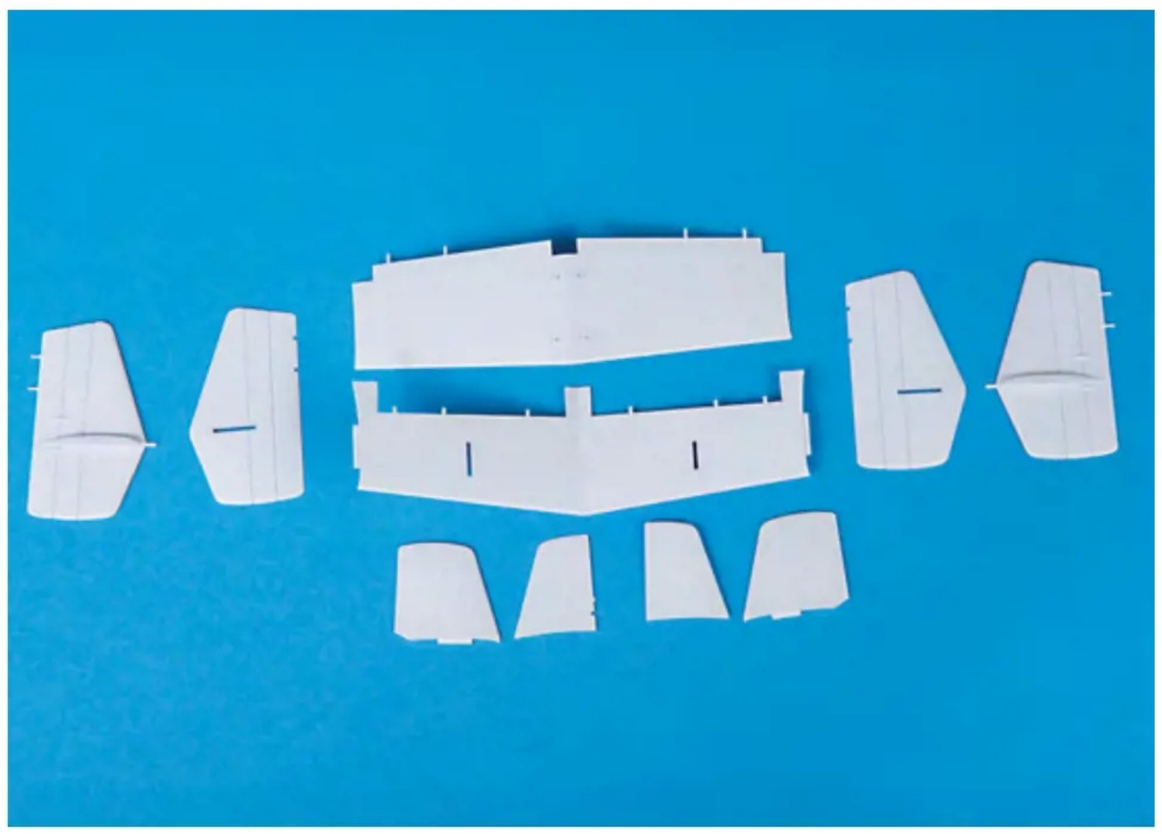
▲ You can't see much through the cockpit glazing, but I elected to fashion seat straps from masking tape.



▲ A forward view of the completed cockpit; everything was painted by hand, but I did also employ two Airscale dial decals.



▲ Here are the fuselage halves. The rectangular piece is designed as interior detail if the fuselage door and steps are posed open.



▲ Grumman's E-2 has a distinctive empennage arrangement and Heller represented it with these ten parts.

coverage also available at www.keymodelworld.com, so please refer to the site for more detailed information. Inside the box were five light grey styrene runners, a clear frame, a colour instruction manual plus an impressive sheet of markings produced by Fightertown Decals.

This was the first Heller kit I've built for *AMW* and I was impressed with the crisply moulded parts and delicate, well-rendered surface detail. Bar those on the undercarriage doors, there were hardly any ejector-pin marks to neaten – a great testament to skilful engineering. Special Hobby E-2 Hawkeye resin wheels were used to replace the kit parts for this build. The first areas approached were the cockpit and nosewheel bay.

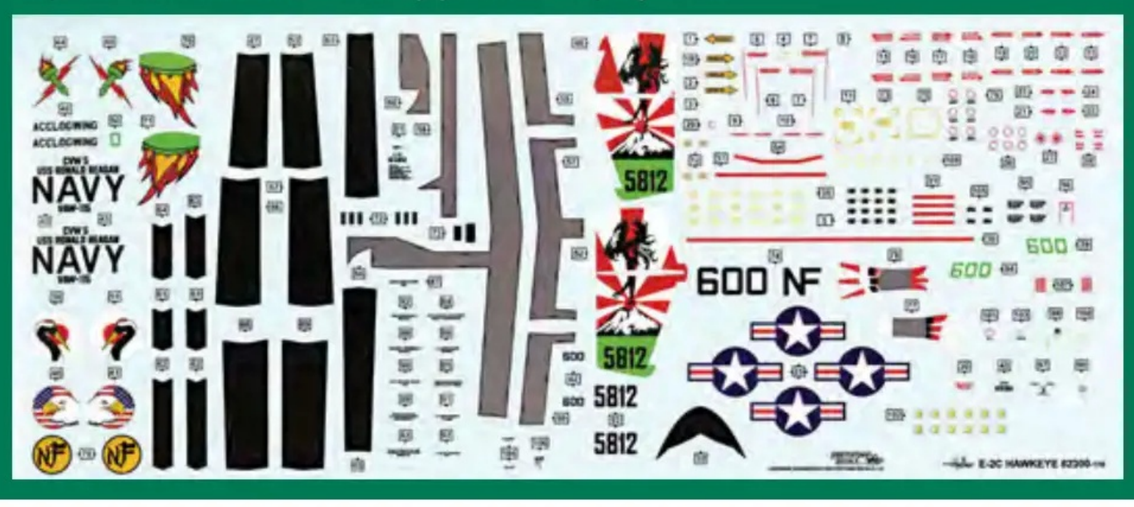
Heller's instructions reference firm's own and Revell paints, but I elected to go for the US Navy standard of FS36231 for the interior and Light Gull Grey FS16440 for the external airframe. These corresponded to Mr. Hobby H317 Grey FS36231 and Mr. Color C11 Light Gull Grey (a close match), respectively. The green on the tailfins was represented by a custom mix of various acrylic shades. All paints were applied using an Iwata HP-CS Eclipse airbrush unless otherwise specified.

Carrier guardian

The cockpit was acceptable for the scale, although no decals were provided for the instrument panel, so it was hand-painted using photo references. The nosewheel was also painted and assembled. This proved to be a vulnerable assembly though, which I broke, fixed and then snapped again during subsequent handling. Heller calls for 40g of nose weight to prevent the model sitting on its tail. So, the correct amount of Deluxe Materials Liquid Gravity was weighed and it became apparent there wasn't enough space in the nose to accommodate this. My solution was to place the weight between the cockpit and fuselage door on the port side, then enclose everything with plastic card. This made for a lopsided weight distribution, but it wasn't an issue once the model was assembled. The glazing panels were all separate and these were dipped in AK Interactive Glass Coat Gauzy Agent, to protect from

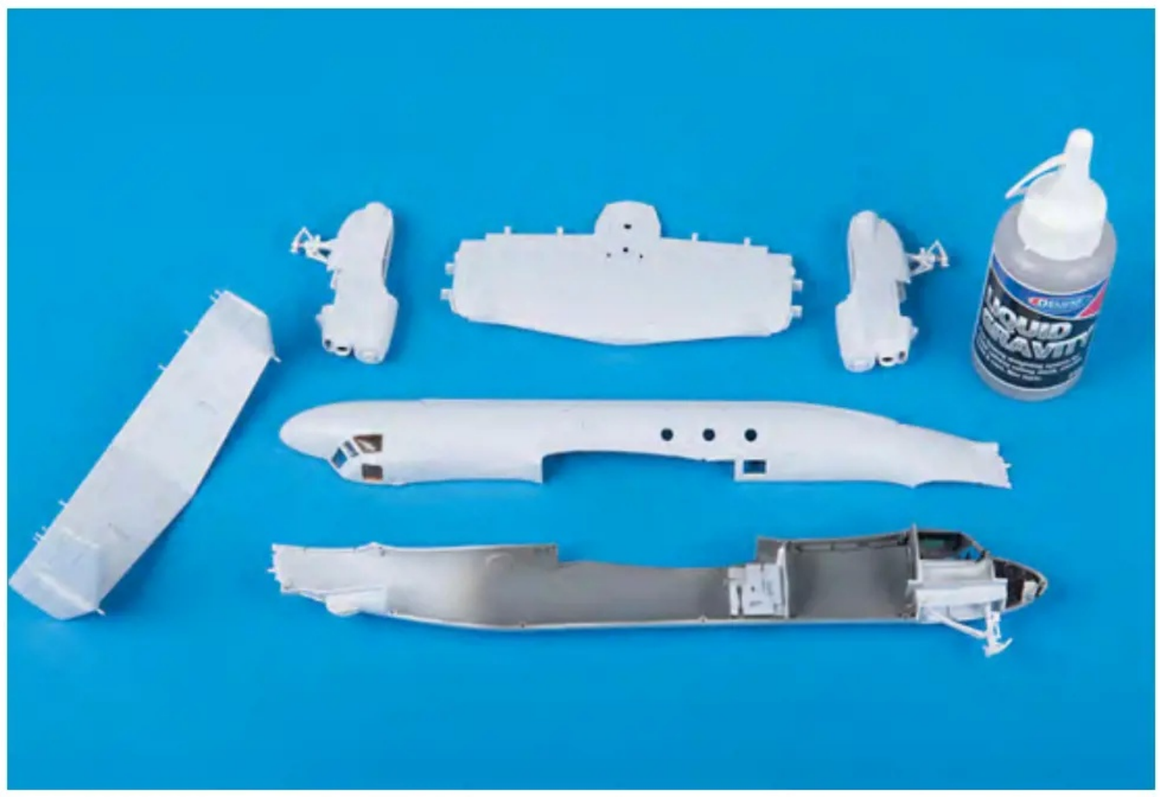
LIBERTY LIVERY

A single, but highly attractive US Navy 2017 scheme was in the kit. This provides for 600/NF, the VAW-115 'Liberty Bells' Commander Carrier Air Group machine, wearing what was also known as its 'Sayonara Atsugi' livery, as the unit departed that base after many years of deployment.



▲ Here we have the fuselage, mid-wing and engine nacelles largely complete. Two styles of propeller were provided, although just the eight-bladed prop was appropriate for the scheme supplied.

▲ Each engine nacelle had to be assembled with the undercarriage... potentially tricky for handling, but all went well.



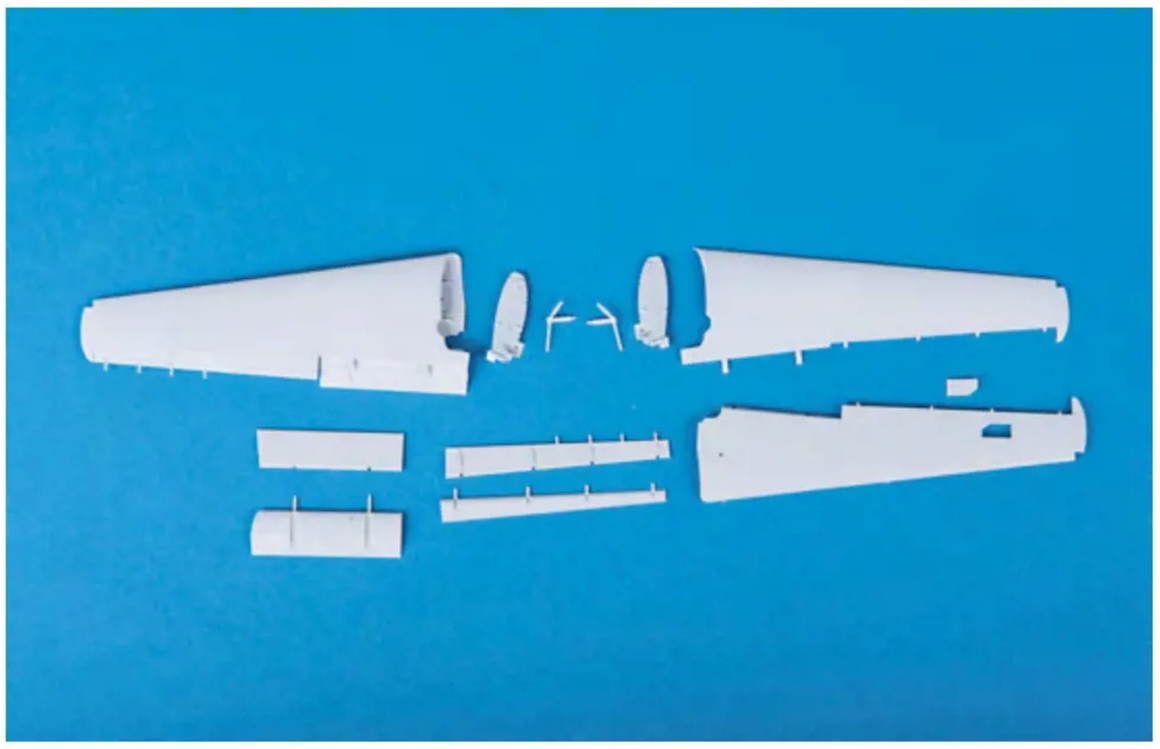
▲ There wasn't enough space in the nose for the 40g of ballast required, so the grey painted area between the cockpit and fuselage door also had weight added.

scratches and guard against glue fogging. I then decided to add these before the fuselage halves were closed to avoid the risk of parts falling into the interior of the model, although I did take the opportunity first to use the panels as templates to cut masks from tape. This approach also allowed the parts to be manipulated and cleaned from both sides; any small smears of Ammo Ultra Glue were removed with a water-moistened cotton bud. Particular surface panels appear to be in an orange colour in some reference photos, so these were painted on the inside using Tamiya X-26 Clear Orange. The empennage was then assembled, although I attached the outer fins upside down to start with, followed by the mid-wing and engine nacelles. The latter also included the undercarriage, but these structures were robust enough to survive the subsequent handling.

Stowed or deployed

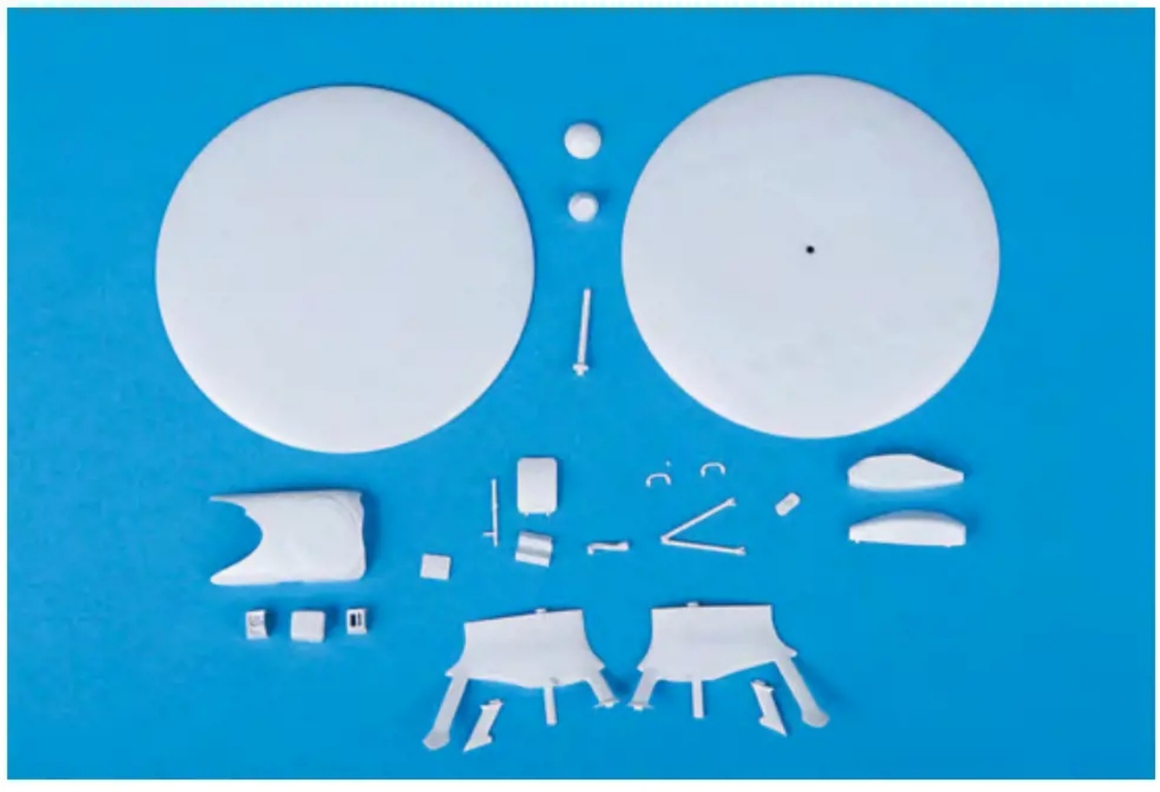
There was an option to display the fuselage door open, complete with access steps and a support, but I elected to close the door. Various aerials and fins were then added, each a compromise between what I thought would survive the handling compared with fixing them after painting. Two large intakes, presumably for ancillary equipment, were also built and attached to the fuselage. The radome support base was assembled and joined to the fuselage, but the radome itself was left off the model until the end of the build.

Each wing could be assembled folded (ideal for those with limited display space) or deployed. My choice was the latter, along with extended flaps so the red fast-opening areas would give an extra splash of colour. Next came the propellers, eight and four-bladed versions were provided, but the kit scheme catered purely for the latter. Presumably, Heller will release other variants of the E-2 in the future. There was a small pipe at the rear of the fuselage; it was too delicate to remediate the join seam, so it was simply removed ▶

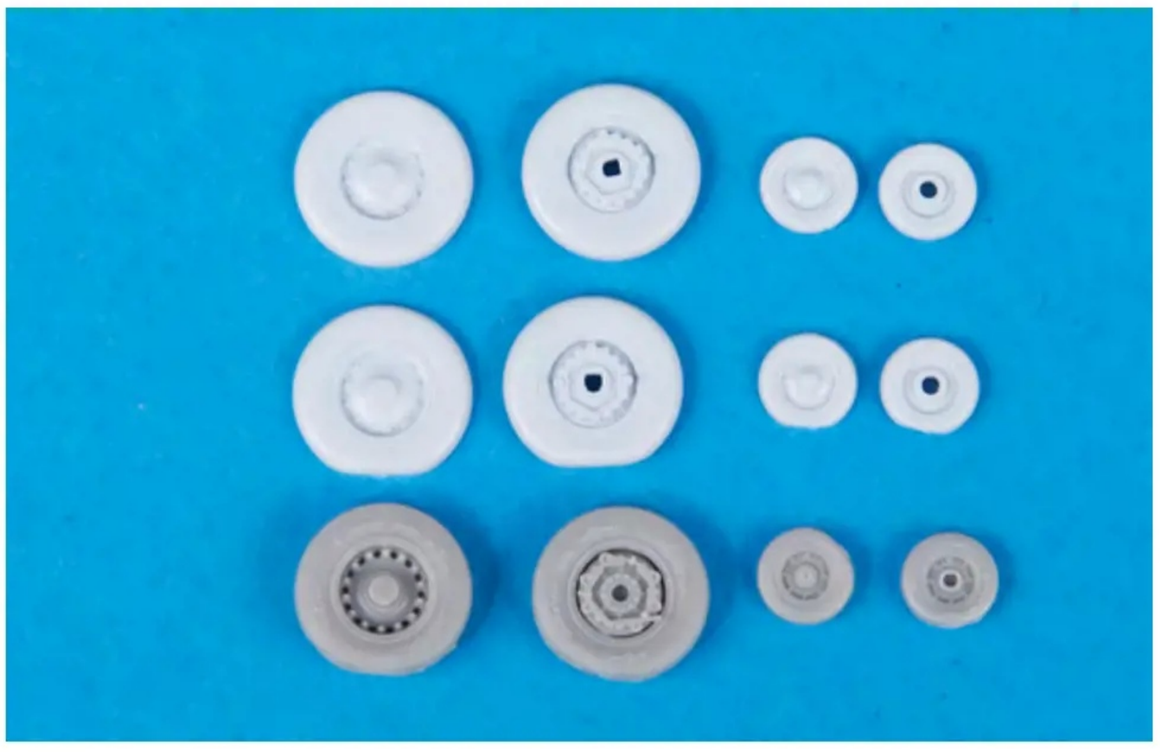


▲ Each outer wing could be posed folded or deployed, with optional parts to support each choice. Extended or stowed positions for the flaps were also possible here.

"There was an option to display the fuselage door open, complete with access steps and a support"

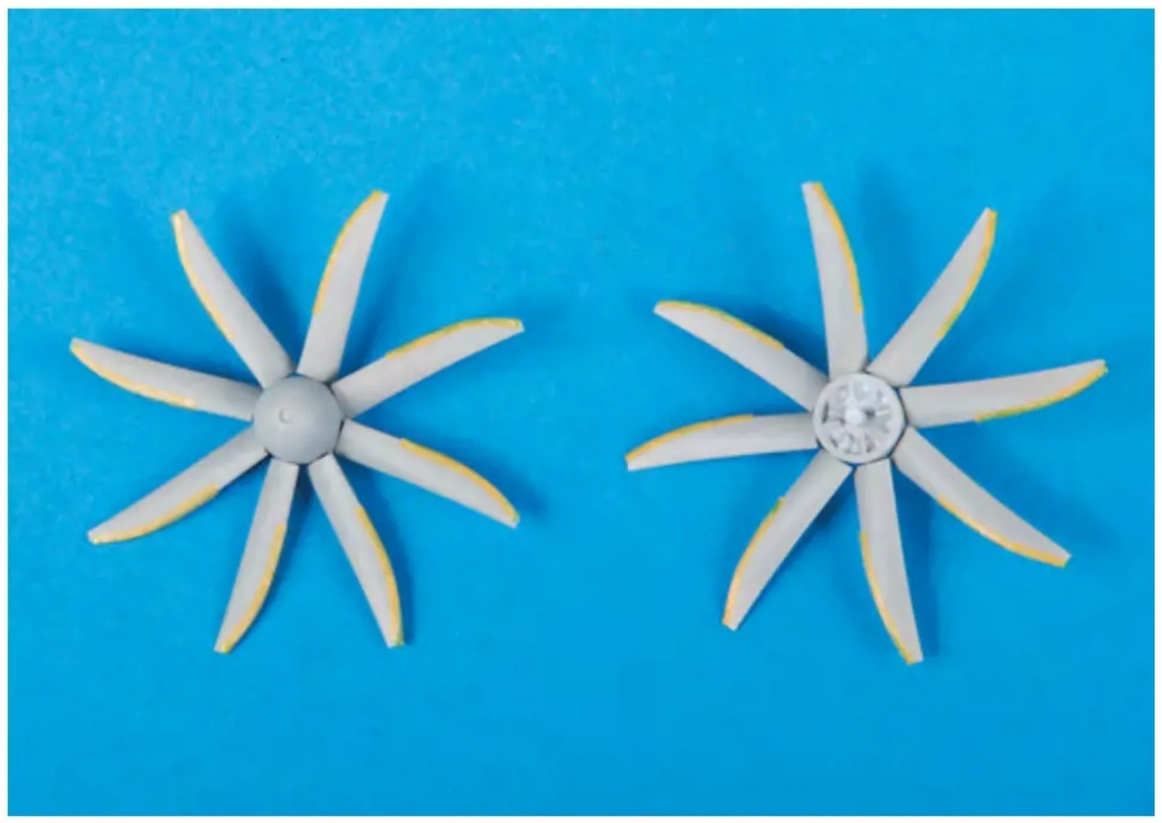


▲ These parts complete the fuselage. They mainly comprise the large radome and its pylon.



▲ This photo compares the replacement resin wheels (bottom) with those in the kit. The latter had bulged (for weight effect) and non-bulged options, but the resin versions offered superior detail.

▲ White primer applied ready for painting. Note the error with the outer vertical stabilisers attached upside down. Doh!



▲ Tricky masking was needed for the propellers. At this point, I strongly considered using decals for the tips, but tenacity and patience meant a better result.

and replaced with a length of aluminium tube from Albion Alloys. The resin replacement wheels were then removed carefully from their casting blocks, the attachment burrs sanded, before they were washed in warm water with dishwashing liquid. Everything was then ready for exterior painting.

Gaudy sentinel

The single scheme option provided was impressive, but if builders would prefer other markings choices, they can consider Eduard's Limited Edition of this kit, which has four additional schemes plus various upgrades over and above the standard Heller offering.

Painting started with a primer coat of Mr Finishing Surfacer 1500 White. This highlighted several seams that needed neatening. Once sorted, the Light Gull Grey was applied, followed by the green on the fins, red for the flaps, plus black for the nose, propellers and one of the intakes.

Once dry, AK Interactive Intermediate Gauzy Agent Shine Enhancer was brush-painted on the airframe to provide a gloss base for the decals. There were many to apply and Fightertown did a splendid job of creating thin, yet robust decals with good colour density. Each decal was released with hardly any soaking. I began by applying the stencils on the fuselage, ticking each off the instructions as I went along to avoid missing any items. Note that some of the smaller decals were connected by carrier film, so had to be separated. The nosewheel was broken again during this process, and this time I drilled holes and inserted a wire brace to finally solve the problem. Static wicks on the rudders were also broken during handling, so these were replaced with metal wire, inserted into drilled holes. All the decals settled into the surface detail well, encouraged by AMMO Ultra Decal Fix setting solution. I would suggest cutting the large red, white and green stabiliser decals in two either side of the oval space, to allow for easier application. I'd also counsel cutting away excess carrier film from the walkway decals around the base of the radome, because these markings fitted tightly. Decals for the bumps on the outer vertical stabilisers didn't fit too well, so they were applied as best as possible and then neatened with hand-painting. The decals for the propeller tips also didn't work well, so I painted the props' ends with Vallejo 70.971 Grey Green. Adding everything took quite a while but,

▲ Here we have the basic scheme completed. Outboard vertical stabilisers the correct way up and the propeller tips painted. Gloss varnish came next.

MATERIALS AT A GLANCE

AK Interactive (www.ak-interactive.com)
AK-893 Glass Coat Gauzy Agent
AK-894 Intermediate Gauzy Agent Shine Enhancer

AMMO (www.migjimenez.com)
A.MIG-2030 Ultra Decal Fix (2)
A.MIG-2031 Ultra Glue

Michael Harding (www.michaelharding.co.uk)
121 Raw Umber
128 Lamp Black

Mr. Hobby/Color (www.albionhobbies.com)
Mr. Finishing Surfacer 1500 'White'
C11 Light Gull Grey
H317 Grey FS36231

Tamiya (www.hobbyco.net)
X-25 Clear Green
X-26 Clear Orange
X-27 Clear Red

Vallejo (www.creativemodels.co.uk)
70.971 Grey Green

Winsor & Newton (https://uk.winsornewton.com)
Sansodor Solvent

▲ All decals applied and sealed with another gloss coat, ready for weathering.

▲ A mix of black and raw umber oil wash was used to weather the aircraft. Here we see the result before the excess wash was removed.

once finished and dried, the whole airframe received another gloss coat to seal everything and ready the model for weathering.

Operational grime

There are many splendid photos of this particular aircraft available on the internet, and these were used to guide the weathering process. Images showed that the engine nacelles were really dirty, accumulating dirt and grime quickly, with stark panel lines and stains, so a custom oil wash of raw umber and black was run along these panel lines. Varying the colour mix allowed tonal variation, with the engine grime being darker than that on the general airframe. The photos also revealed that the front fuselage, wings and radome were relatively clean... so again, this was replicated by varying the intensity of the wash. Once dry, the airframe was wiped gently with a paper towel, impregnated with a small quantity of Winsor & Newton Sansodor low-odour solvent. The closing tasks were to add the various missing static wicks, plus the undercarriage doors and propellers. One early-warning 'bird' completed!

Hawkeye hurrah!

Heller's 1/72 E-2C Hawkeye is a splendid kit. It was well engineered with great surface detail and parts fit. Several of the decals were slightly challenging, but not in a serious manner. The eight-bladed propellers demanded much effort in masking but, in my opinion, the result was well worth it. WIth four-bladed propeller versions unused in this package, an earlier Hawkeye variant is likely in the future and these appear much simpler to assemble and paint. I'd wholeheartedly recommend Heller's Hawkeye kit for modellers of all skill levels.

"This was the first Heller kit I've built for *AMW* and I was impressed with the crisply moulded parts"

MARVELLOUS MODELFEST

▲ AIM Models' Robin Gilby created this superb scene from Operation Striker Denial in Sadr City, Iraq, during April 2008, using Tamiya's 1/35 M1A2 SEP Abrams TUSK II kit as the centrepiece. He then set it against an RT Diorama building backdrop, while Master Box figures offer a sense of movement and scale.

▲ Fantasy subjects are always big draws, especially when they are painted as well as Julian Adamson's Nordic Giant Slayer. He started with a Poste Militaire Giant and Wolfskin set, but added torn flesh effects using Milliput, before using oils to create this stunning 'giant-slayer' scene.

▲ There were several eye-catching vehicles on the Horsham Modellers Club IPMS stand, including this 1/24 R8 Samba Sleepah kit-bash by Gavin Snowdon. He combined Revell's 1/24 VW Samba with the engine and wheels from the firm's same-scale Audi R8 to create this weary-looking machine with plenty of engine power to spare!

▲ Lukgraph's 3D-printed kits build into impressive models, such as this 1/32 Curtiss Jenny biplane, which received its dazzling livery thanks to Tangmere Scale Modellers' Leo Stevenson, who added plenty of extra detail and a full complement of bracing wires.

It's amazing what even the slightest tweaking of the floor plan can do for a show, and this year's Farnborough Modelfest was an ideal example, with its minor repositioning of tables allowing for what appeared to be much improved access for modellers and visitors alike. The latter received a notably warm welcome from the hosts, clubs and Special Interest Groups (SIGs), with many discussions regarding the models and dioramas on display.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the show was the number of youngsters taking a look around – arguably one of the several benefits of holding this event within a leisure centre. Even better, more than a few were noted hauling away at least one kit, so hopefully they are new followers of the hobby. Plans are already afoot for next year's Modelfest event, so if you're in the area in September, it's well worth investigating!

Stu Fone

▲ Laurence Cassidy's Village Garage scene is built around an AK Interactive 1/35 Land Rover plus a Tamiya same-scale Harley-Davidson (converted from the Military Police set), while the petrol pump is an old Dinky toy rescued from a friend's garden. The garage front is an old cast resin item, which received heavy weathering plus extra signage.

▲ ISCA Model Club Exeter member Kim Crellen used the 1/48 Kinetic Su-33 *Flanker-D* kit to replicate this Soviet-era carrier variant of the Sukhoi Su-27, completing it in Russian markings and suitably weathered camouflage.

▲ This superb Churchill Mk.VII 'Toad' heavy flail tank was created by IPMS Churchill SIG member Mick Hazell, combining Tamiya's 1/35 Churchill with an Accurate Armour conversion set.

▲ Tamiya's 1/48 F-16C Block 32 was one of many fine exhibits on the Casey Ryback Scale Models Table, with Scott Acutt finishing it as an Arkansas Air National Guard unit airframe, using the kit decals.

Cleared to leave space dock

Polar Lights' 1/350 USS *Grissom* gets a name change and aftermarket upgrades as **Massimo Santarossa** puts her into service

Stardate 8210.3. Location: Genesis planet, Mutara system. This was where we first encountered USS *Grissom,* under the command of Captain J T Esteban. It was a rather ignominious introduction as the vessel was shortly thereafter dispatched by a Klingon photon torpedo. However, we would see this class of ship again.

The Oberth-class starship – to which *Grissom* belonged – was/is (it does take place in a future time, after all) a science vessel. First commissioned in 2269, USS *Oberth* was the lead ship in a class that, by some accounts, went on to number 2174 vessels. The design was modular in nature, making for ease of construction and being inexpensive compared with other starships, with an intended 60-year life span (*Oberth* was actually retired in 2373).

For *Star Trek* modellers, there are numerous kits on the market, but most are in smaller scales, such as 1/1400 and 1/2500. Selection in the 1/350 range is limited, thus the introduction of the Polar Lights kit was most

▲ Six sheets of Greenstrawberry's photo-etched brass were incorporated into this build, requiring the use of specialised tools, including – but not limited to – a set of dedicated PE cutters and a bending jig.

MODEL SPEC

***Star Trek The Search For Spock* USS *Grissom* NCC-638**
By: Polar Lights
Stock code: POL991
Scale: 1/350
Price: £79.99
Available from: Amerang (www.amerang.co.uk)

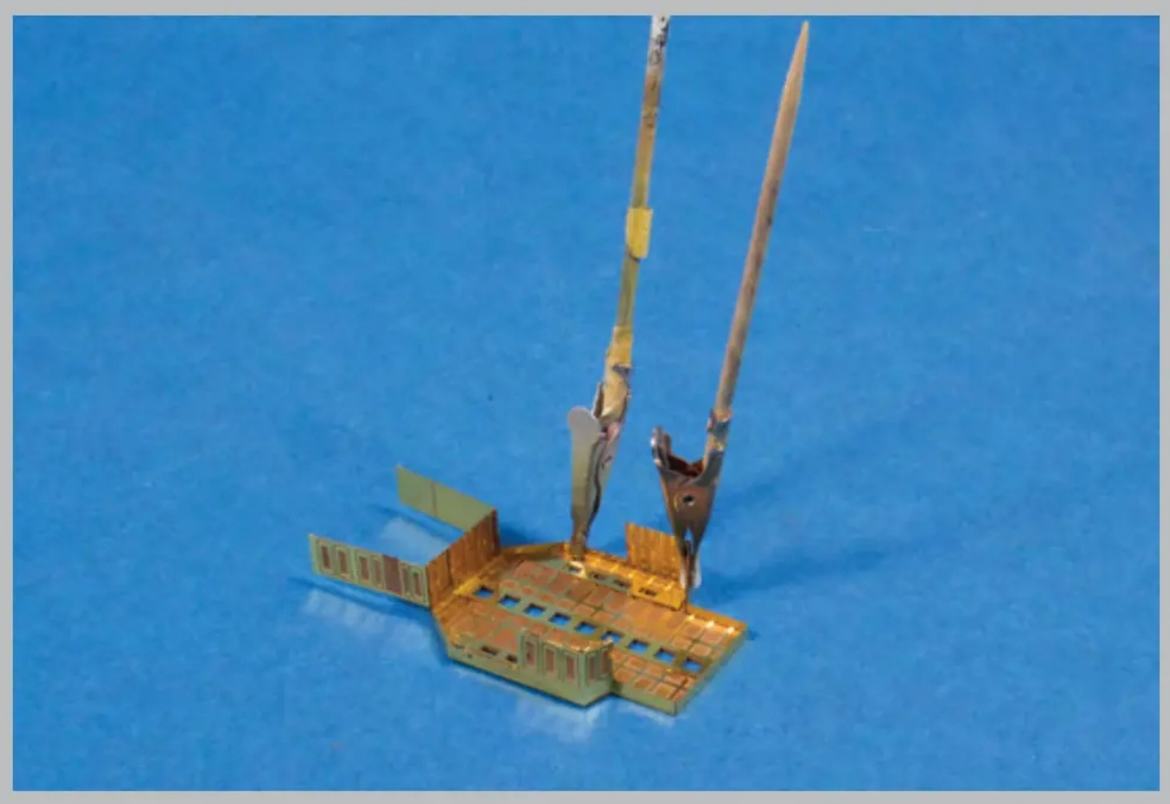
welcome. This, like its on-screen counterpart, is modular in form. Comprising 79 parts, in both white and clear styrene, it features well-moulded detail, having just a hint of flash. Several pieces, such as the lower hull halves, are quite large, being attached via substantial runner gates, which require the use of a razor saw to separate. A well-printed decal sheet completes the package, providing markings for seven different ships from both the films and various television series.

Greenstrawberry from Czechia (former Czech Republic) produces a wide range of aftermarket for the sci-fi universe, including several aimed directly at *Grissom*. Three model-specific sets, both photo-etched (PE) brass and resin in nature, were acquired to cover interior and exterior details. Also obtained was a generic WorkBee and cargo set. Cross-referencing was needed before beginning construction to use the correct parts, and it was with these metal components that work commenced.

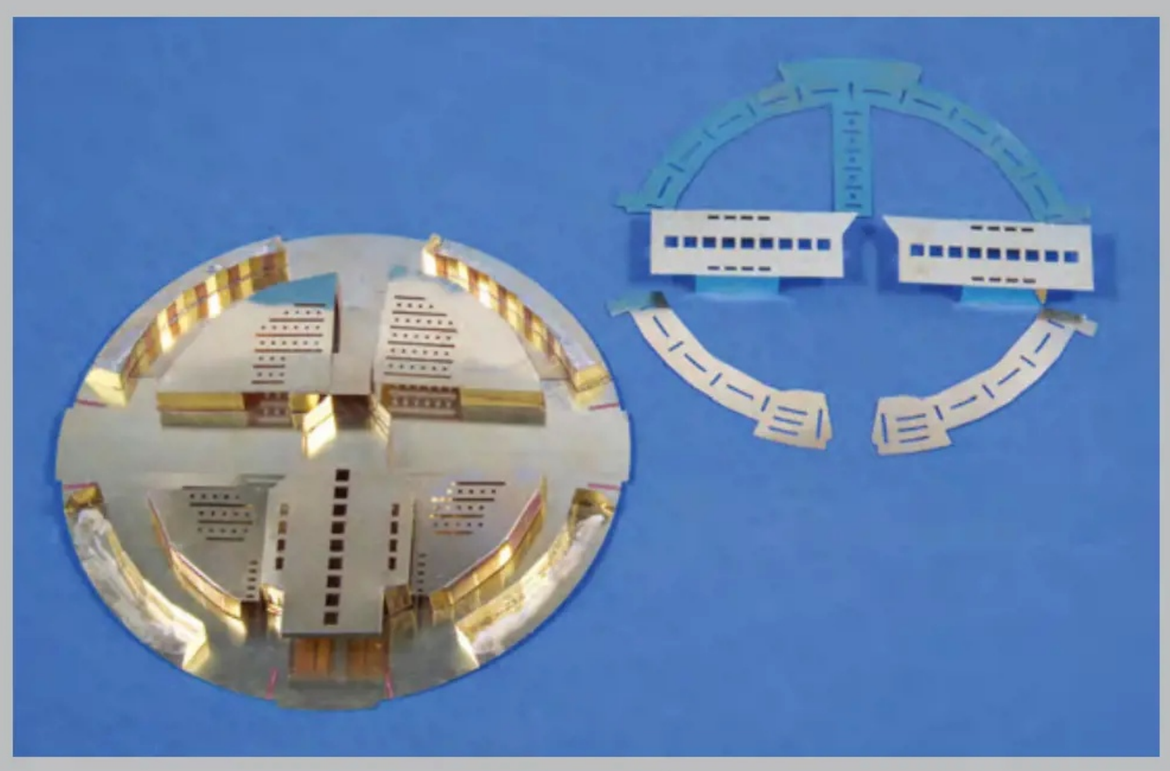
Brass fittings

Each PE sheet was first wiped with lacquer thinner, as experience has shown this not only helps glue stick better but also aids with paint adhesion. Greenstrawberry's PE was a doddle to work with, being some of the highest quality examples to come across the workbench. Removing the individual parts was accomplished easily using a sharp blade or cutter, with just the occasional nub left to file. The metal had distinct score marks along all fold lines, which made bending the parts to shape simple and kept the folds straight. Using cyanoacrylate glue (CA), it did not take long before the bulk of the pieces were assembled.

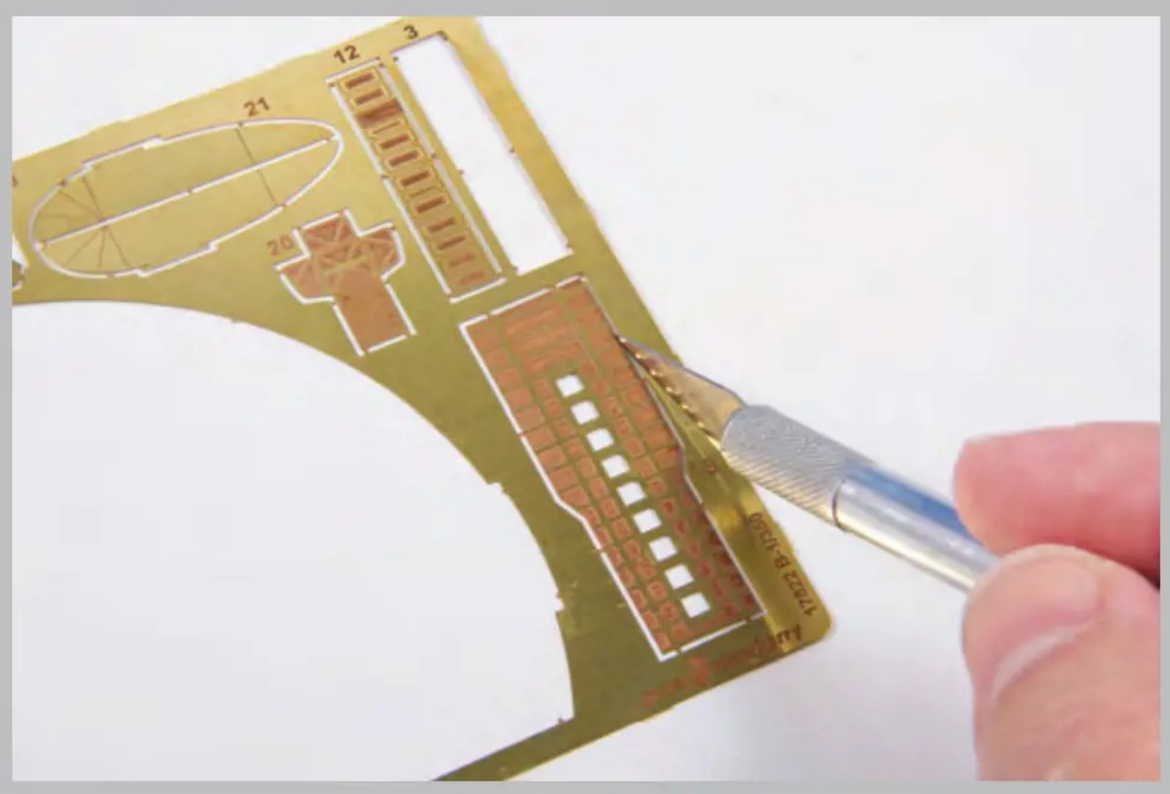
The PE did present one problem: too much choice! Not all Oberth-class ships were identical in their fittings,



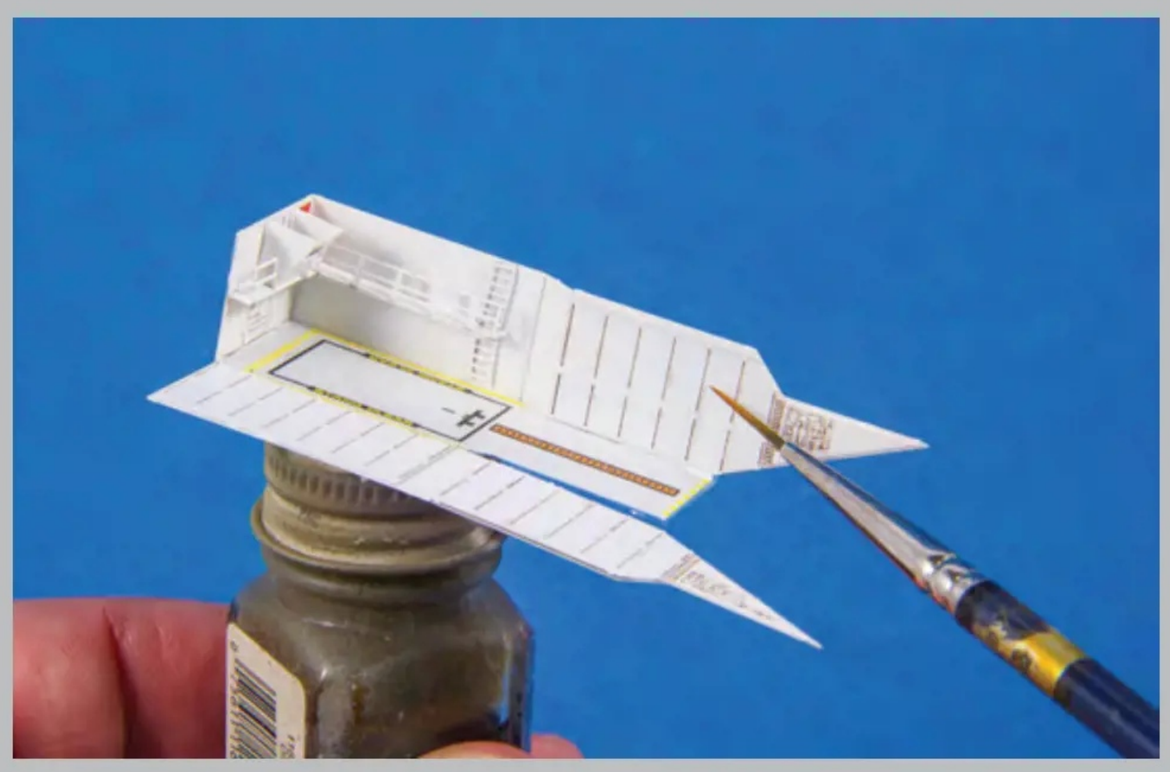
▲ As soldering metal was not a skill I possess, the PE parts were assembled using thin CA and held together with small alligator clips during construction.



▲ The primary components of the main shuttle bay ready for paint. The quality of the brass was such that it did not take long to cut, bend and assemble the various parts.

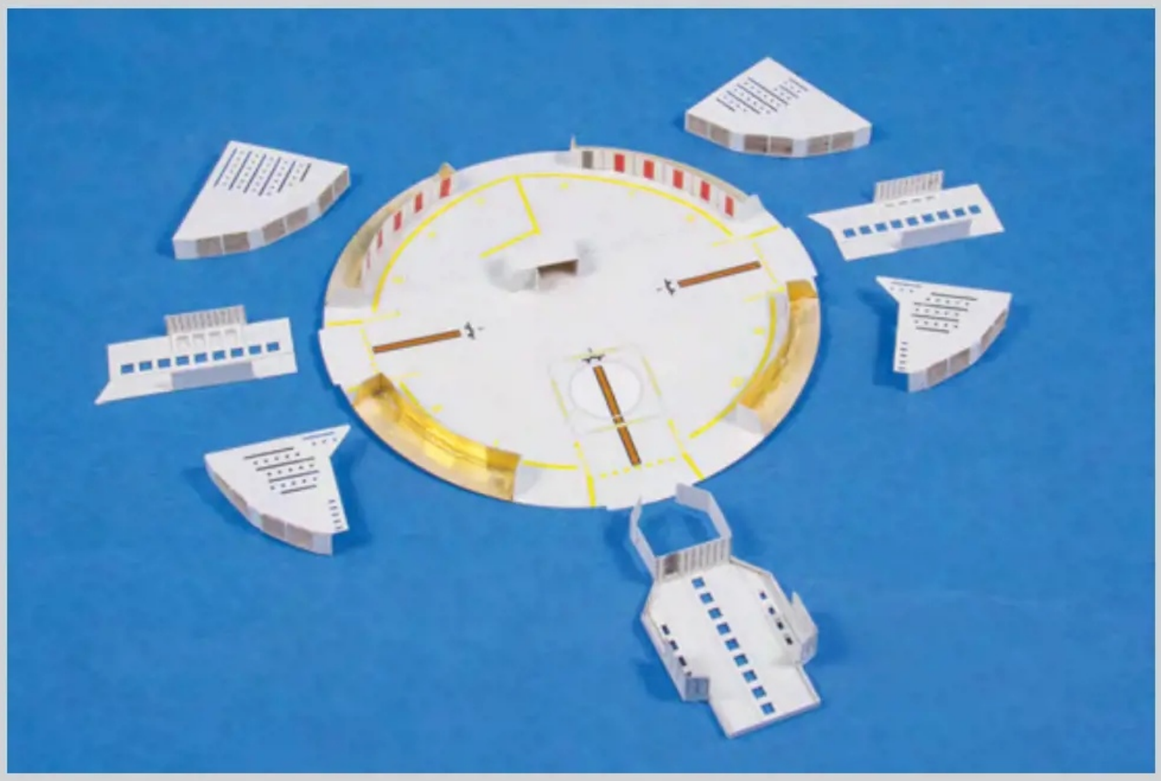


▲ The PE was well designed on thin brass sheets, featuring fine attachment points. These were cut easily with a sharp blade on a smooth floor tile.



▲ The lower cargo/shuttle bay, along with the other interior parts, was given a wash of Raw Umber – the contrast with the background white helped accentuate the detail.

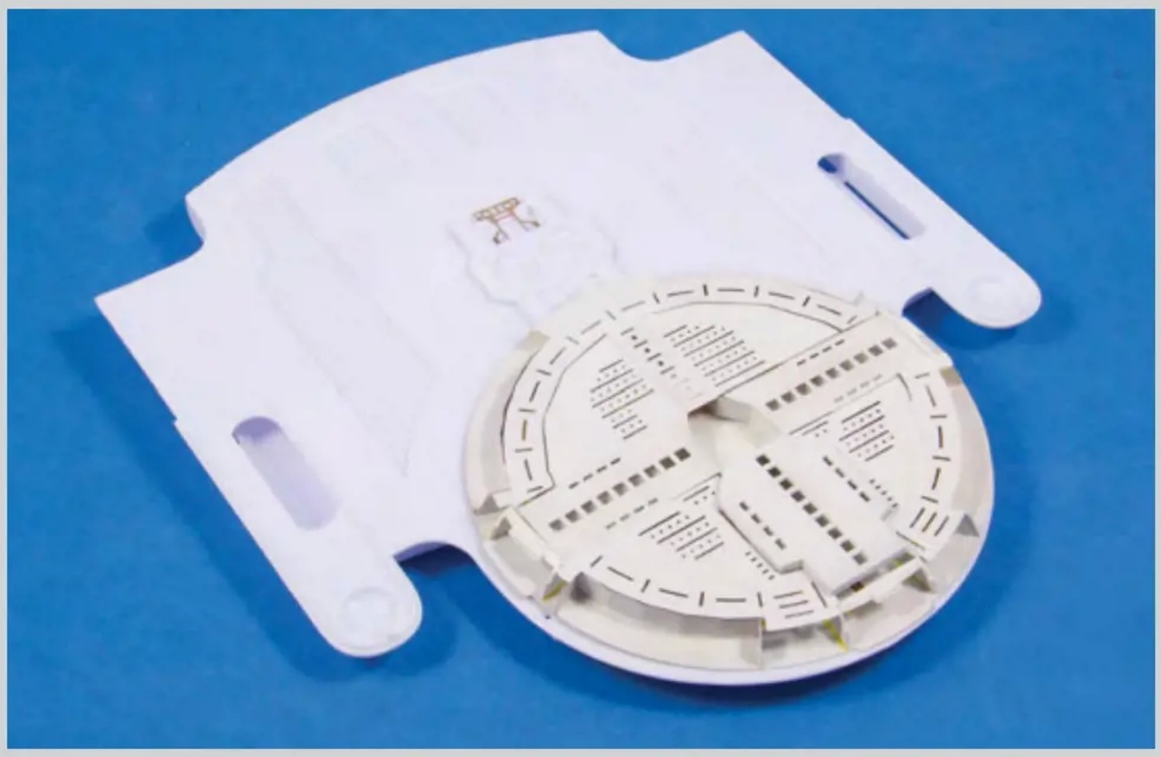
thus not all the metal pieces were needed, depending on which ship was being built. For example, USS *Grissom* did not have a secondary shuttle/cargo bay nor the upper hull ventilation grilles, but these PE options were included. From the outset, a decision had to be made as to which starship to build, and as it seemed a waste not to include as many of the extras as possible, it was the USS *Oberth* that was duly 'commissioned' into service.



▲ The main shuttle/cargo bay parts were painted and detailed similarly, then decals applied. The real question was how much would be seen once enclosed in the model?

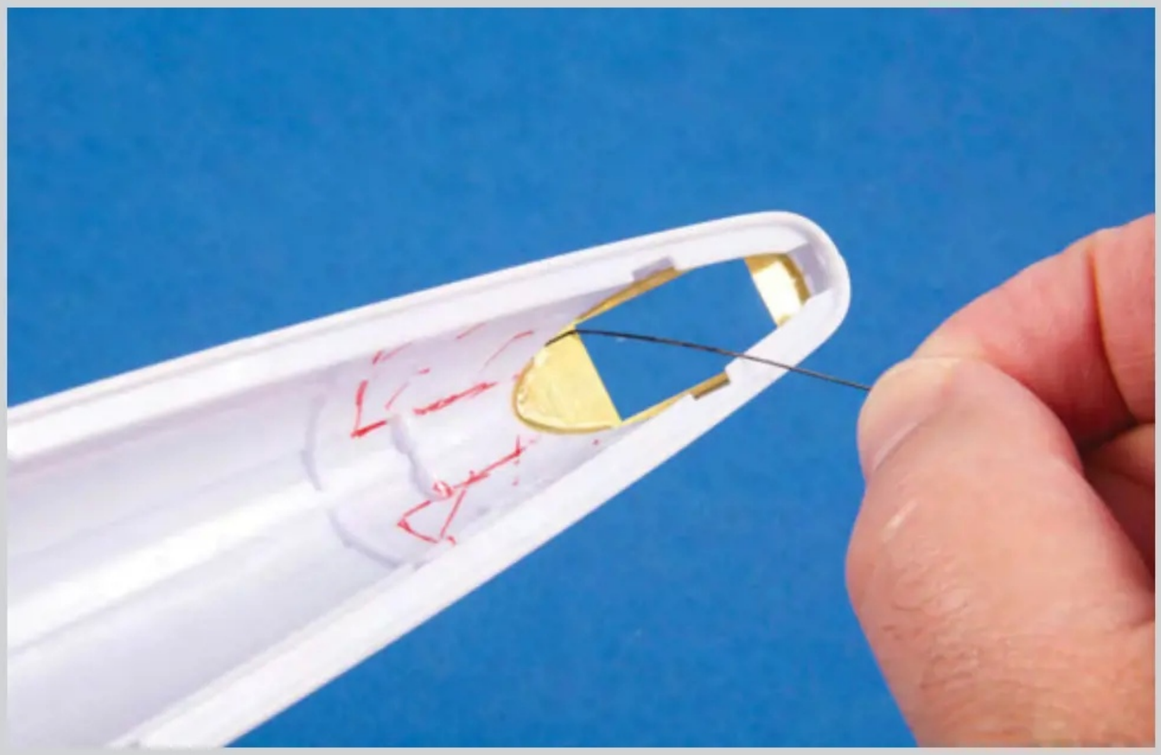
The metal components then received primer, before being sprayed gloss white tinted with 4765 Light Gray FS 36495. This overly bright shade made them more visible once installed within the model. Additional colour was added using a set of decals that came with the PE, including the option for two differently coloured storage doors, either red or black. These were easy to use, but required their carrier film to be cut away to fit accurately. A Raw Umber oil wash highlighted the detail, as this shade contrasted well with the base colour, making the interior features even more visible. When dry, the main and secondary hangar bays were assembled fully and placed into the model.

After removing any plastic that would interfere with its mounting, the main cargo/hangar bay was



▲ The completed cargo bay fit snugly within the saucer section. The PE upper surfaces were also painted Light Grey so their brass colour would not be visible through the ship's windows.

▲ The completed lower shuttle bay is clearly visible through the open doors. The exterior detail would be highlighted later with an oil wash of Raw Umber.



▲ With the lower hull halves glued and the appropriate plastic areas removed (outlined in red), the aft bulkhead was attached, first using drops of PVA then permanently with a bead of CA.

▲ The main sensor pod was placed temporarily within the lower hull to determine its final position. In this way, a centreline was established and the vinyl masks could be applied.

"Polar Lights' 1/350 USS *Grissom* is a welcome addition to the *Star Trek* universe, especially given the larger scale"

attached to the upper hull using PVA. Using this glue allowed time to make any final adjustments before mounting the saucer section over the top, itself secured with traditional plastic cement. Next, the secondary hull halves were mated to install the lower shuttle bay, leaving the very front unglued as test-fitting indicated the lower sensor pod could be installed separately after painting. Again, after removing any superfluous plastic, the aft bulkhead was attached, followed by the lower shuttle bay, which was secured with CA.

Plastic fittings

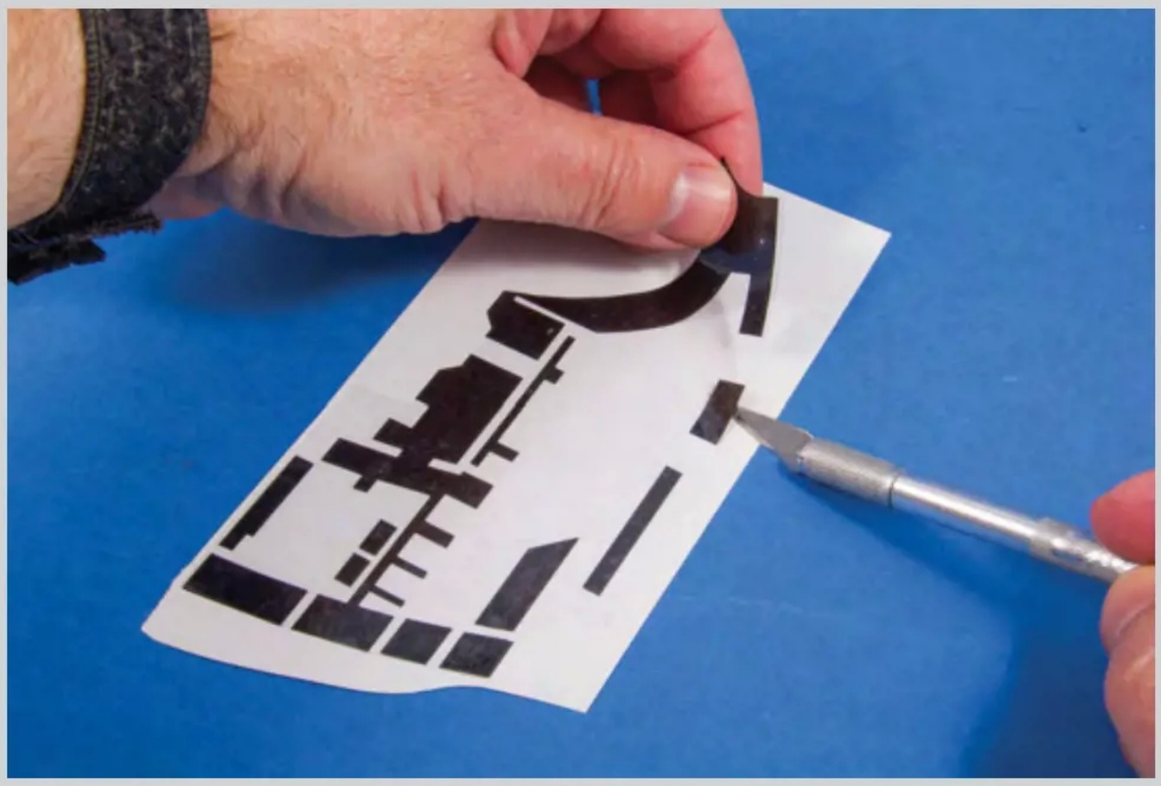
The number of styrene parts included was not huge, which hastened construction. This was accelerated even more quickly due to the fact that many pieces were large, while several items – specifically most of the clear parts – were not used. In addition, the overall fit was fairly good. Putty was needed along glue seams that were a little wider than ideal, while sanding was required to achieve a flush fit in places. Assembling the model was a rather simple affair, and had it not been for the use of PE, the whole kit could have been built over a weekend.

Masking magic

Before moving onto paint, I'll offer some words about masking. On first glance, it may appear the paint scheme of a *Star Trek*

▲ Unlike the sensor pod, the cryogenic storage tanks had no specific masks supplied, so metallic shades of Dark Aluminium and Duraluminium were applied freehand or with simple taped masks.

▲ The four main sub-components primed and painted for the next phase, application of masking. On reflection, the resin warp engine field grilles could have been left off until later.



▲ Burnishing the clear film onto the black vinyl also pressed the latter more securely to its backing paper. A sharp blade was needed to lift both layers off the paper in one piece.

▲ With the masks in place, the colours forming the 'aztec' pattern were sprayed. Each shade had its own mask, which took time to apply but the results were more than worth the effort.

ship is rather plain, being almost monotone. The truth is more complicated, though, thanks to what has been termed the 'aztec pattern' – first seen on the refit USS *Enterprise* in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* – which was applied to most of a ship's hull along with various coloured body stripes. The movie model-makers' aim was to better represent a sense of scale on the film versions, along with the need for greater detail than that seen on the TV vessels.

Thus, a bespoke masking set was acquired from MaskDesign, which greatly aided in the finishing of the build. This was a vinyl product, which included two different types of mask (depending on which parts they were applied to) and a clear carrier film used to place them correctly. The masks were cut precisely for this specific model, which made the task of painting the various colours much easier than the traditional cut sections of tape. They were, however, very sticky, especially onto the fingers, thus care was needed when handling them. Online instructions were available for their use, including recommended paint colours, plus a series of YouTube tutorials. These videos proved incredibly useful and the model was masked following these recommendations. As a first-time user of this product, it took a little patience to get the hang of how to best employ them, but the end results were more than worth the time and effort.

What's in a name?

Why choose the USS *Oberth* instead of *Grissom*? In trying to determine which colours to use, it became clear that there was no single standard. The kit instructions were of little help, stating just the most basic of shades, such as white, metal or duck-egg blue, while the mask set did have several painting suggestions, but they were based on artists' acrylics. Determined to use which model paints were readily available to hand, I mixed my own custom shades.

Another factor in determining the ship's name was the use of the PE details. As stated, not all ships in the class were the same, with differences existing between sub-classes. The USS *Oberth* was the lead ship in the class and, as often happens with these vessels and prototypes, was used to test further design features, such as a shuttle bay and paint schemes. It was this

"Each PE metal sheet was first wiped with lacquer thinner"

▲ **Each colour was built in thin layers so as not to become too overwhelming, with a highly diluted Light Grey/White filter sprayed to blend and mute the shades further.**

justification that was used in deciding how to build the ship and which colours would be applied. Some may disagree with my rationale, while others might call it artistic license.

Ship's colours

Painting the model started with the metallic parts, specifically the main forward sensor array, and the lower hull's cryogenic tanks. These parts were first primed with gloss white, then given an Alclad ALC-101 Aluminium base coat. The sensor array was mounted temporarily to determine its centreline and the supplied masks used to set the paint pattern. Two metallic shades, ALC-103 Dark Aluminium and ALC-102 Duraluminium, were then sprayed following the masking instructions. The cryogenic tanks, though, did not have a specific pattern, thus the colours were applied either freehand or using simple tape masks. Once dry, the paint was sealed under gloss varnish.

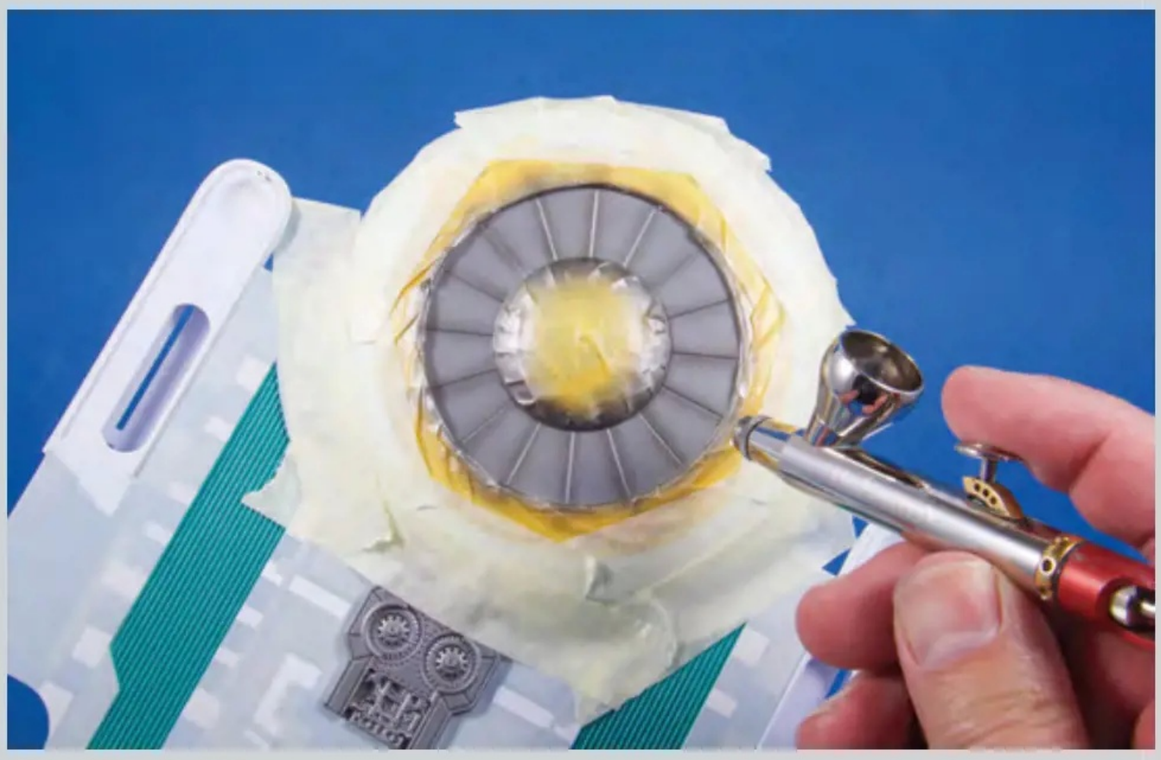
With the metallic sections protected by Parafilm, the remaining four primary sub-components (upper and lower hulls, plus warp nacelles) were assembled. These received two coats of Mr. White Surfacer 1000, which acted as both primer and base layer. Using my own custom blends (see *Paint mixes*) and the masking set, colour was added to the ship. Each shade was mixed to a thinner-than-normal consistency, allowing the paint shades to be built gradually. As each tone, along with its mask, was used in turn, the model's appearance grew more vibrant. The precise design of the vinyl masks, however, meant that even the slightest misalignment would result in gaps between

PAINT MIXES

After much research, it would appear there are as many colour guides for painting *Star Trek* models as there are Trekkies. The MaskDesign set provided its own guide based on the *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* studio model, but it used craft paints that might not be available to some. As a result, custom mixes corresponding to the MaskDesign names were developed (note, I used my existing stocks of the now-defunct Model Master range – equivalents for other brands can be determined via the FS numbers). The mixing ratios were unscientifically created using the 'looks about right' method. Please forgive me.

Light Blue	4765 Light Gray FS 36495 + hint of 2012 Cobalt Blue
Dark Blue	4765 Light Gray FS 36495 + more drops of 2012 Cobalt Blue
Light Blue 2	C307 Grey FS36320 + C1 White
Dark Blue 2	X-4 Blue + X-14 Sky Blue
Powder Blue	2033 Blue FS 35414
Light Grey	1731 Aircraft Gray FS 16473 + 1745 Insignia White FS 17875
Light Grey 2	4765 Light Gray FS 36495
Turquoise	XF-23 Light Blue + RC206 Russian Cockpit Turquoise
Black	XF-1 Flat Black + XF-50 Field Blue
Metallic Grey	XF-56 Metallic Grey

The vinyl masks were produced with a high degree of precision, such that even the tiniest misalignment was noticeable, resulting in localised masking and repairs.



▲ **Centre sections of both the upper and lower main hull received metal shades. Panel lines were highlighted with a darker colour to add tonal variations to an otherwise flat surface.**

▲ **After many hours of masking and multiple shades of paint (along with several touch-ups along the way), the model was ready for a gloss coat of Future in preparation for decaling.**

MATERIALS AT A GLANCE

AK Interactive (www.ak-interactive.com)
RC206 Russian Cockpit Turquoise

Alclad (www.alclad2.com)
ALC-101 Aluminium
ALC-102 Duraluminium
ALC-103 Dark Aluminium
ALC-104 Pale Burnt Metal
ALC-112 Steel
ALC-312 Klear Kote Semi-Matte

Greenstrawberry (www.greenstrawberry.cz)
16522-1/350 Oberth Class – Exterior
17822-1/350 Oberth Class – Interior and Hangar Bay
17922-1/350 Oberth Class – Warp Engine Field Grille
00514-1/350 WorkBee – Cargo Train and Grabber Pack

MaskDesign (MaskDesign - Facebook)
KIT9 USS *Grissom* Masking Kit and Paint Guide

Microscale (www.microscale.com)
Micro Set
Micro Sol
Krystal Klear

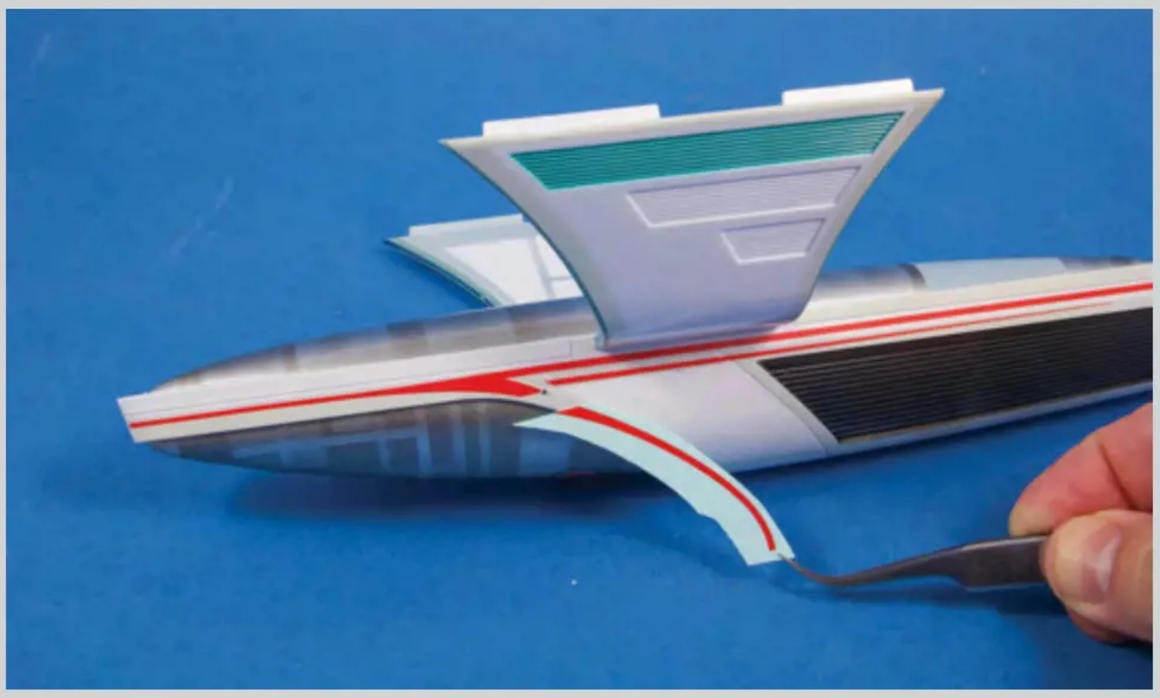
Model Master (now out of production)
4765 Light Gray FS 36495
2012 Cobalt Blue
2033 Blue FS 35414
1731 Aircraft Gray FS 16473
1745 Insignia White FS 17875

Mr. Color (www.albionhobbies.com)
C307 Grey FS36320
C1 White
Mr. White Surfacer 1000

Tamiya (www.hobbyco.net)
X-4 Blue
X-14 Sky Blue
XF-1 Flat Black
XF-23 Light Blue
XF-56 Metallic Grey
XF-50 Field Blue

Winsor & Newton (www.winsornewton.com)
Raw Umber
Lamp Black

▲ The kit decals adhered with no fuss whatsoever. Their registration and colour density were good, and all responded well to the use of MicroScale decaling solutions.



▲ Several larger decals, such as the lower hull's full-length pinstripes, were cut into smaller segments, making application both easier and quicker.

▲ A Lamp Black oil wash was applied to the machinery parts, such as the warp core, impulse drive, and pylons, to give them added depth.

Federation markings

The kit decals were well printed and easy to use, responding well to Microscale's decal solutions, and all were applied in a single session. Because seven ship names and registrations were included, trimming of the red pinstripes would be necessary if opting for one of the longer titles. Several longer markings were cut into smaller sections and applied individually to make handling easier. This posed no problems and did not slow the process at all. The decaling instructions, curiously, were printed on the sides of the kit box, which frankly was rather cumbersome. Also, two decals were technically unusable as they were labelled 'NCC–1701 *Enterprise*'. A minor faux pas, which frankly would probably not have been noticed. Once given 24 hours to set completely, the model was sealed under a layer of ALC-312 Klear Kote Semi-Matte.

As the bulk of the clear parts had not been used (because masking such small openings would have been a nightmare), Krystal Klear PVA was used to fill the openings and thus create more than acceptable-looking windows. Once the glue had cured, the main parts of the ship were finally joined together using CA, then *Oberth* was mounted on the supplied display stand.

Support crew

Greenstrawberry's aftermarket WorkBee set comprised both resin and PE parts. The metal pieces, despite their small size, folded as easily as their larger cousins, while the three crew shuttles were separated from their casting blocks using a fine-toothed razor saw. The parts were primed and painted various colours: grey for the shuttles and a mix of shades for the cargo containers. This would denote their

colours, which consequently required touch-up painting.

Other areas of the ship were painted using the tried-and-true method of masking with Tamiya tape. The bridge section received Aluminium while the disc surrounding was treated with Duraluminium. A light misting of ALC-112 Steel was applied to the panel lines to create a hint of depth. Then, a mix of XF-1 Flat Black and XF-50 Field Blue was created for the lower hull sides, while a similar custom mix of Turquoise was applied to the upper grille detail. Most of these colours were matt shades and thus had a slightly rough surface, which was buffed smooth using an old cotton cloth. It took several hours to get all the various paint colours applied, but once finished, all were treated to a coat of Future floor polish.

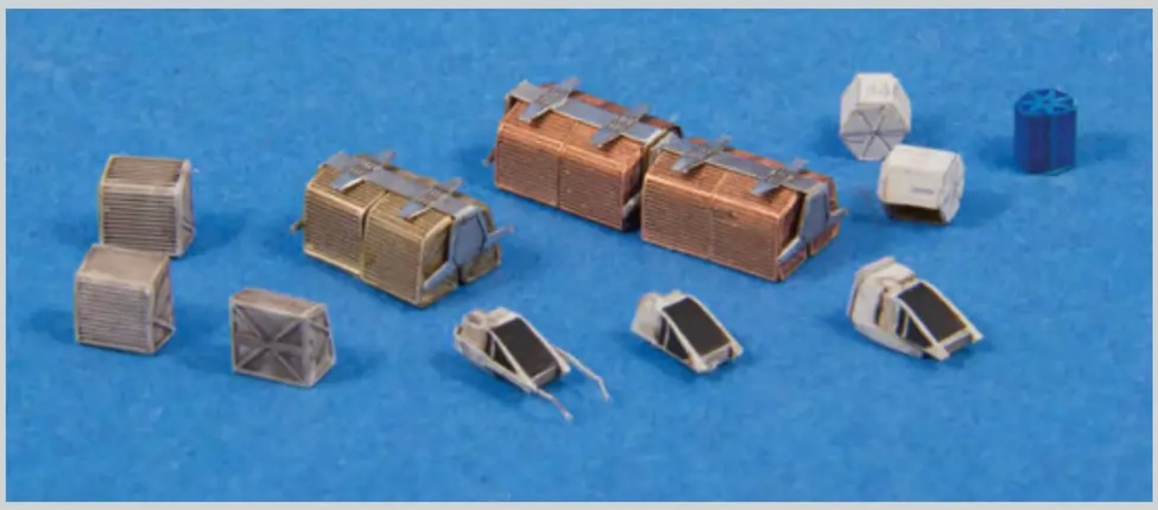
“Several pieces, such as the lower hull halves, were quite large, being attached by substantial runner gates”

purpose and add variety to their final appearance. The shuttles and hexagonal cargo canisters just barely fit in the main cargo/shuttle bay, while the fit of the cargo train was likewise very snug in the lower shuttle bay. This unit was mounted on a thin length of brass rod showing it exiting the ship, giving the model more visual appeal.

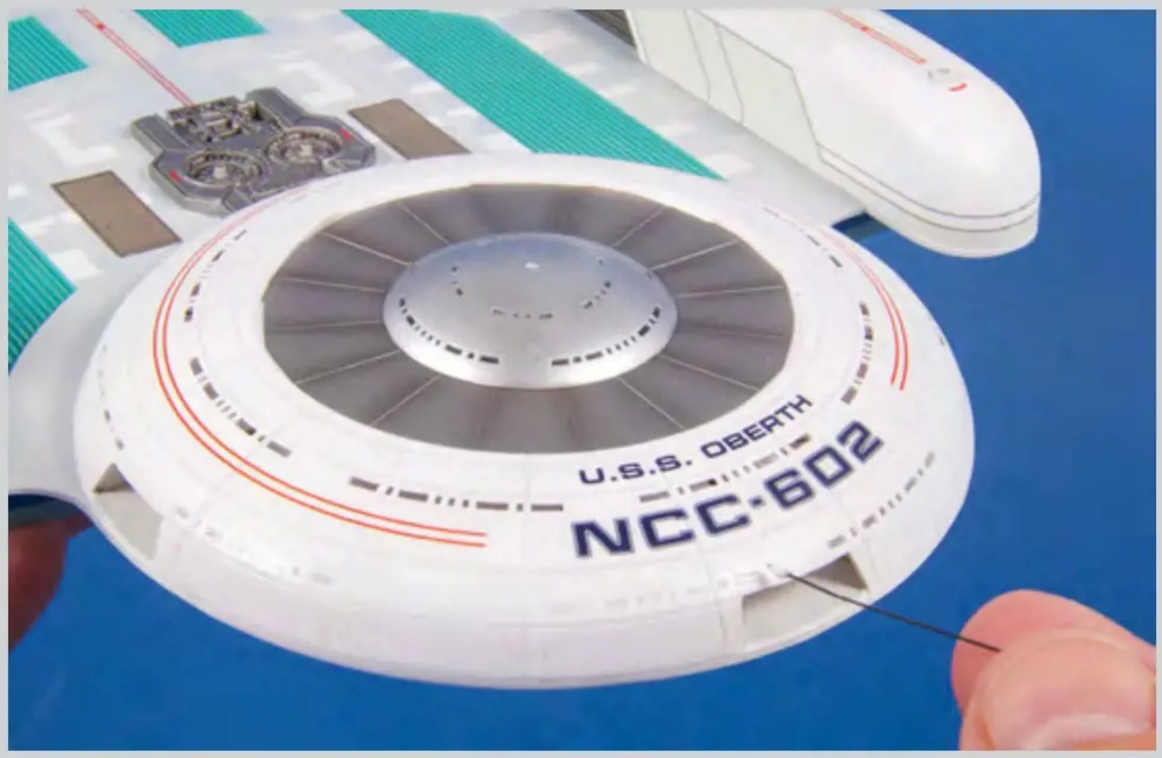
To boldly go

Polar Lights’ 1/350 USS *Grissom* is a welcome addition to the *Star Trek* universe, especially given the larger scale. The kit itself is uncomplicated and goes together easily, making it ideal for a modeller of any skill level, while the inclusion of a comprehensive decal sheet, with various marking options, provides more building possibilities. The use of PE details added some additional life to the model; however a good portion of it was invisible in the completed build, making its use somewhat questionable. The MaskDesign set, on the other hand, was almost indispensable in achieving an out-of-this-world paint finish. Modellers, whether into science fiction or not, will find this an enjoyable project. Live long and prosper.

▲ The size of the WorkBees and the cargo containers is indicated by placing them next to a 25 cent coin (about the size of a 10p piece). Despite their minuscule size, the PE parts were not overly difficult to work with.



▲ The various cargo containers were painted in different colours... not just to show their different uses, but also to add life and variety to their appearance.



▲ The kit’s clear parts were not used for the ship’s windows. Instead, Krystal Klear PVA was preferred to fill the openings, resulting in more than acceptable looking ‘glass’.

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976/25

BIGGLESWADE BONANZA

Sam Elkington's dazzling black-and-white chequered Bristol Fighter, which generated plenty of attention on the Great War Special Interest Group stand, used the Wingnut Wings' 1/32 kit. He matched it with a masked finish to replicate this training livery, with the crocodile nose art being hand painted.

The host club put on a magnificent display of film- and TV-related builds, including this Moonraker shuttle by Ben Hartmann from the James Bond film of the same name. He used Revell's 1/144 SCA and Orbiter, replacing the kit markings with Draw Decal alternatives, plus added foil to replicate the original highly polished ex-American Airlines Boeing 747 livery and lighting (from a Lidl Christmas lights set) for the exhaust flames.

Over the years, smaller model shows have proved a real boon for the hobby; not just because there's an almost familial atmosphere, but also the size itself adds to visitor appeal. How so, I hear you ask? Well, at an event such as the Chiltern Model Show, held once again at The Weatherley Centre, Biggleswade – after a year's hiatus – it's easy to have a browse around the displays and traders' stands fairly quickly, before going back to take a closer look at items (or kits) of interest. It also means that the warm and welcoming atmosphere is immediately palpable... and when that involves the Chiltern club, you know you're in for a great event. If you've never been to a model show, then venues such as this one in Bedfordshire are ideal, and the sheer richness of the models on display is sure to impress you.

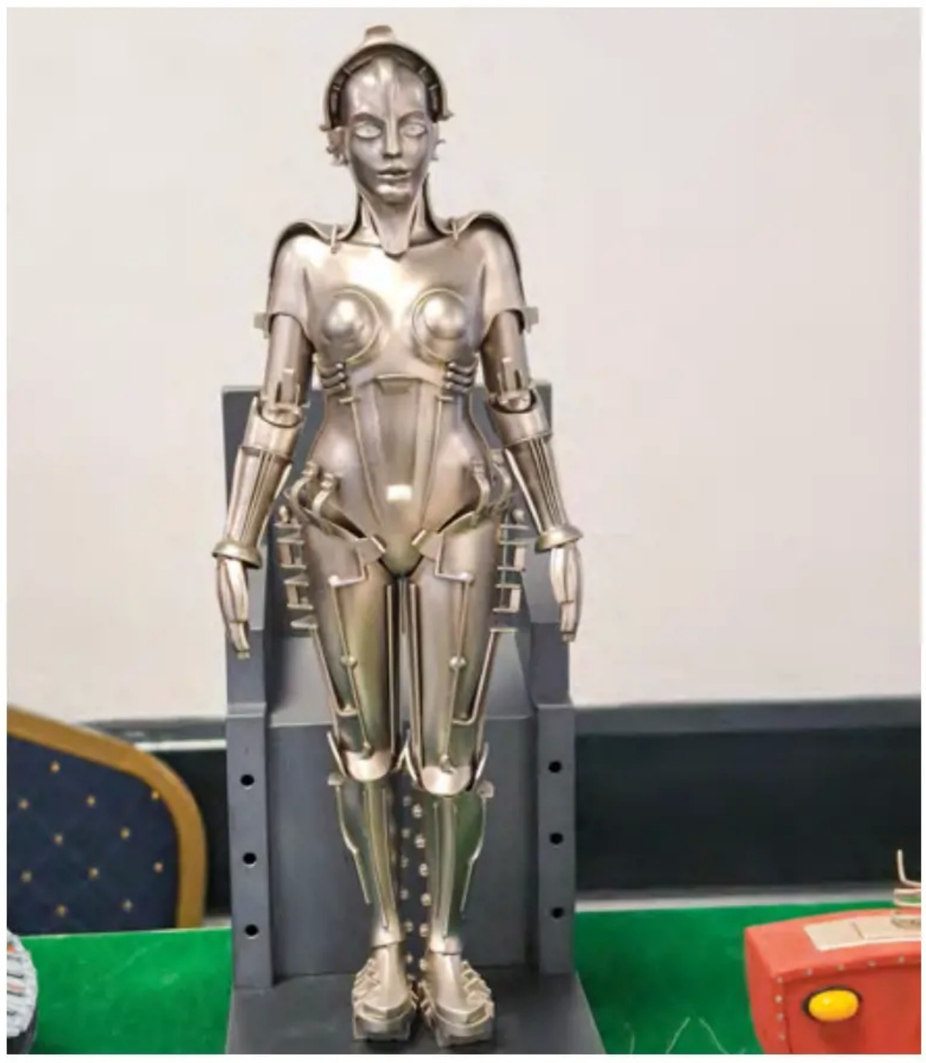
Stu Fone

New Scale Modeller Peter Fenlon-Smith created his 'On the road to Caen' diorama using the Tamiya 1/35 Churchill Crocodile Mk.VIII as its centrepiece; he added extra stowage and figures to complete the scene.

Hobby Boss' 1/72 Hawker Sea Hawk was completed by a West Norfolk IPMS modeller as an Operation Musketeer airframe embarked on HMS *Albion*.

There's been a recent revival of interest in classic kits – especially auto subjects – and Watford Scale Model Club's Jon Rackham indulged his nostalgia via Revell's 1/25 Mooneyes Dragster, adding new brass-wired front wheels, and brass axles to enhance his model.

▲ Special Hobby's 1/72 P-40 kits have been popular with modellers. This desert-liveried P-40N Warhawk was built by Peterborough Scale Model Club's Stuart Young, straight from the box, but with subtle weathering added to the airframe.



▶ There were many sci-fi models on the combined IPMS Harrow and Barnet tables, with Roger Brown's excellent X-Plus 1/8 Robot 'Maria' – from the 1927 film *Metropolis* – one of several fine exhibits on display.

▼ Just For Fun Modeller Cate Rae used a shop-discarded copy of Iron Maiden's Aces High long-player as the perfect backdrop for her Revell 1/32 Spitfire Mk.II, with the band's mascot 'Eddie' at the controls, complete with fake 'bullet holes' in the vinyl... proving you can combine your favourite music with modelling!

Chris Jones applies an eyecatching 1994 Tiger Meet scheme to the recently reissued Special Hobby 1/72 Mirage F.1C

Tiger time

Dassault's Mirage family of aircraft must rank among the most attractive military jets ever built. Beyond its sheer good looks, the Mirage F.1 was a capable multi-role combat aircraft. Apart from service with the French Air Force, it was exported widely, being flown by a long list of countries all over the world. One French unit that flew the type was EC 1/12 'Cambresis' and, thanks to the unit's tiger heritage (it was formed when two squadrons, including SPA 162 'Le Tigre', were merged), it became one of the key participants in NATO Tiger Meets. These annual events see NATO 'tiger' squadrons collaborate in large multi-national exercises, which not only enhance co-operation and unity within NATO, but also serve as brilliant social and public-relations events. It has become a tradition for participating units to decorate at least one or more of their aircraft in stunning tiger-inspired paint schemes. From an enthusiasts' and a modelling perspective, NATO Tiger Meets have produced some of the most extraordinary liveries ever seen on military aircraft.

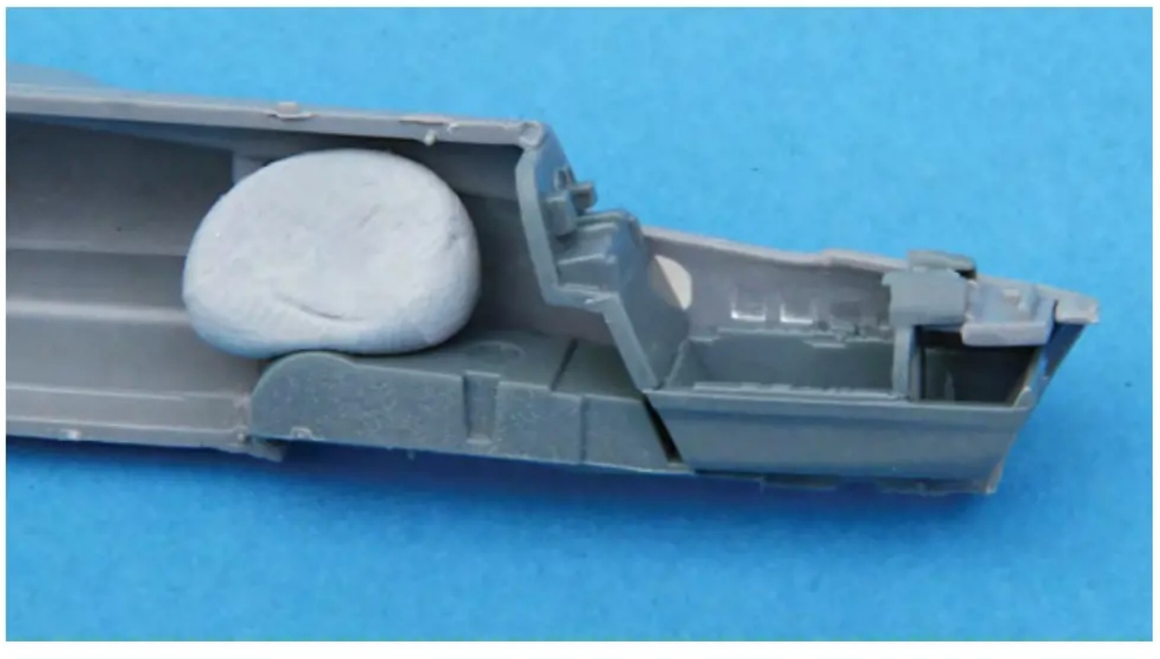
Fast fuselage

After removing the fuselage halves from the runners, several ejector-pin release marks needed filling and sanding on the cockpit sidewalls. The 'office' parts count was minimal, but it was perfectly reasonable at representing the

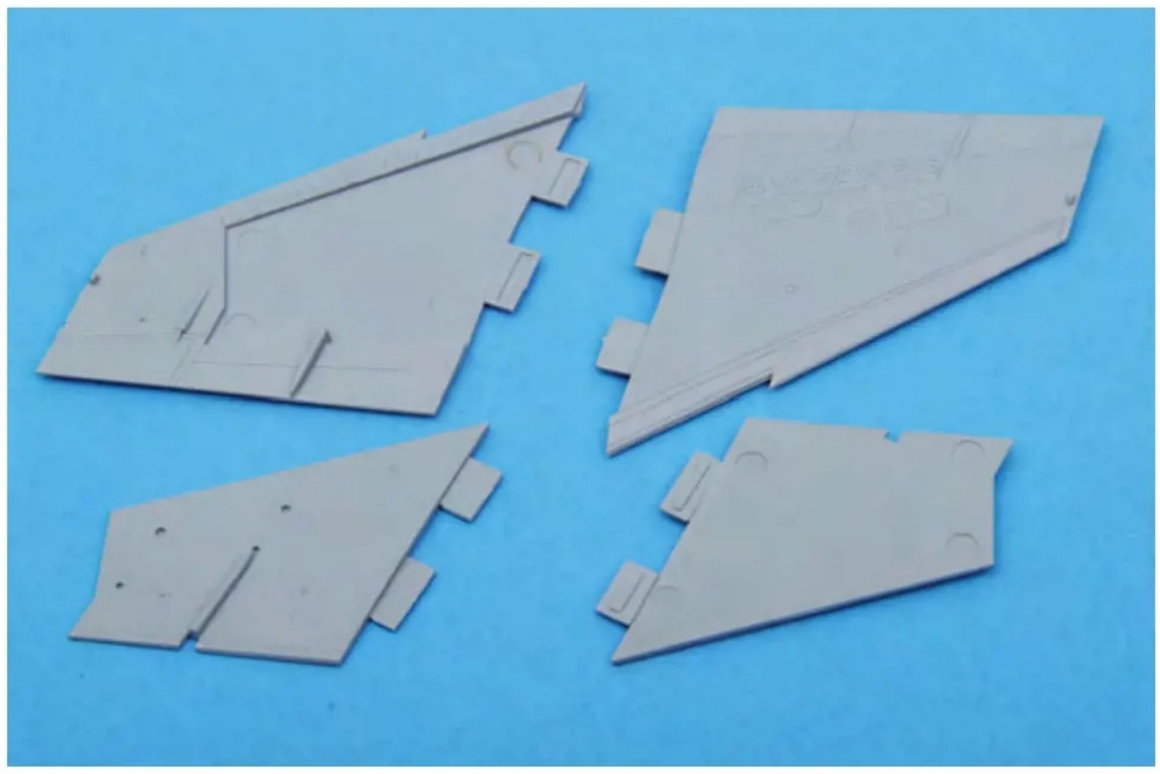
MODEL SPEC

Dassault Mirage F.1C/C-200
By: Special Hobby
Stock Code: SH72388
Scale: 1/72
Price: £17.62
Available From: Special Hobby (www.specialhobby.eu)

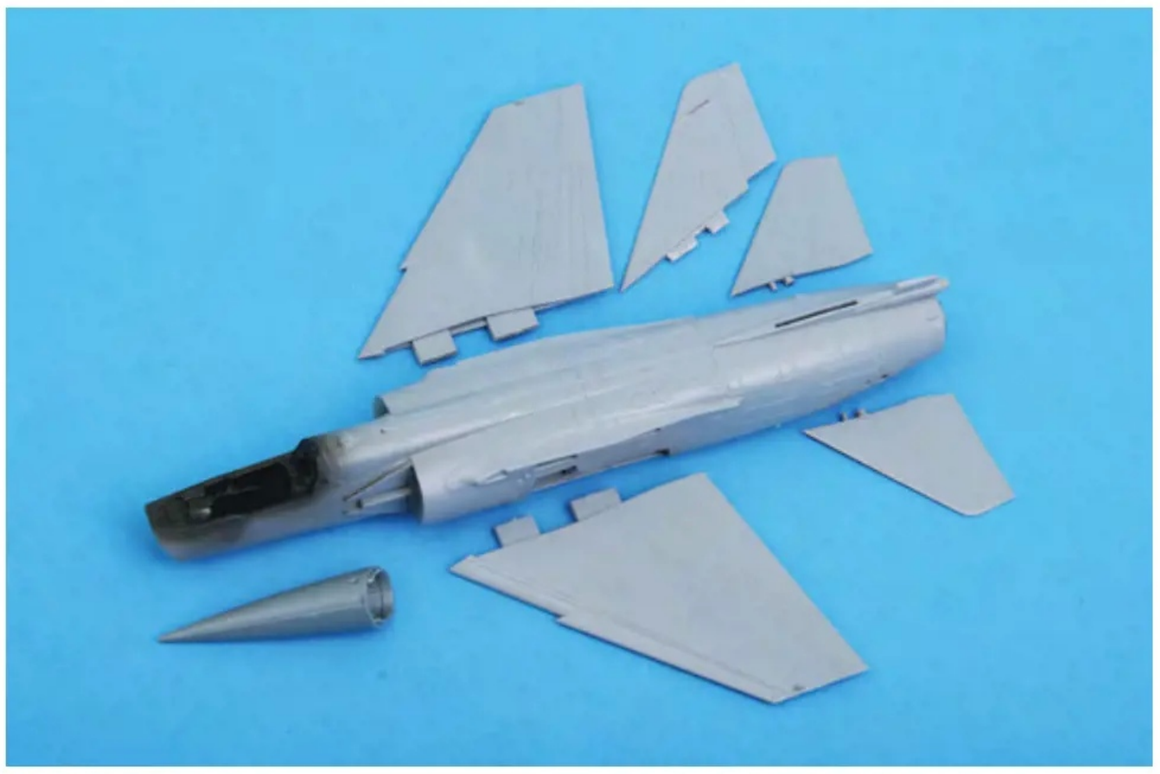
▲ The cockpit parts count was small, but more than adequate at depicting the Mirage F.1 'office'.



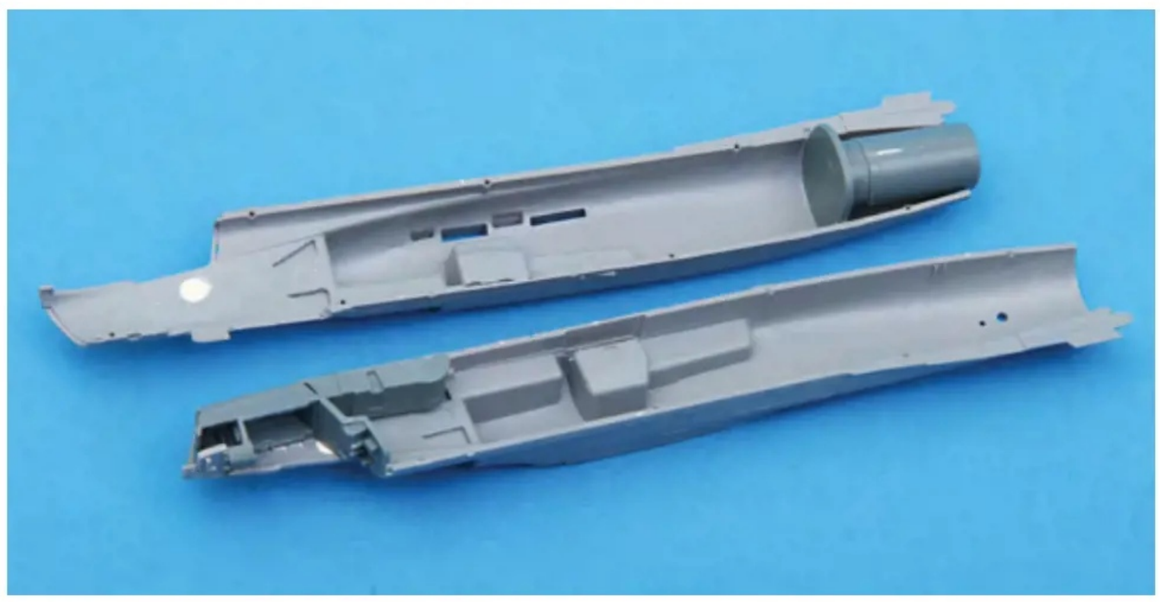
▲ Blu Tack was used to temporarily hold the nosewheel bay and cockpit tub in place while the glue set.



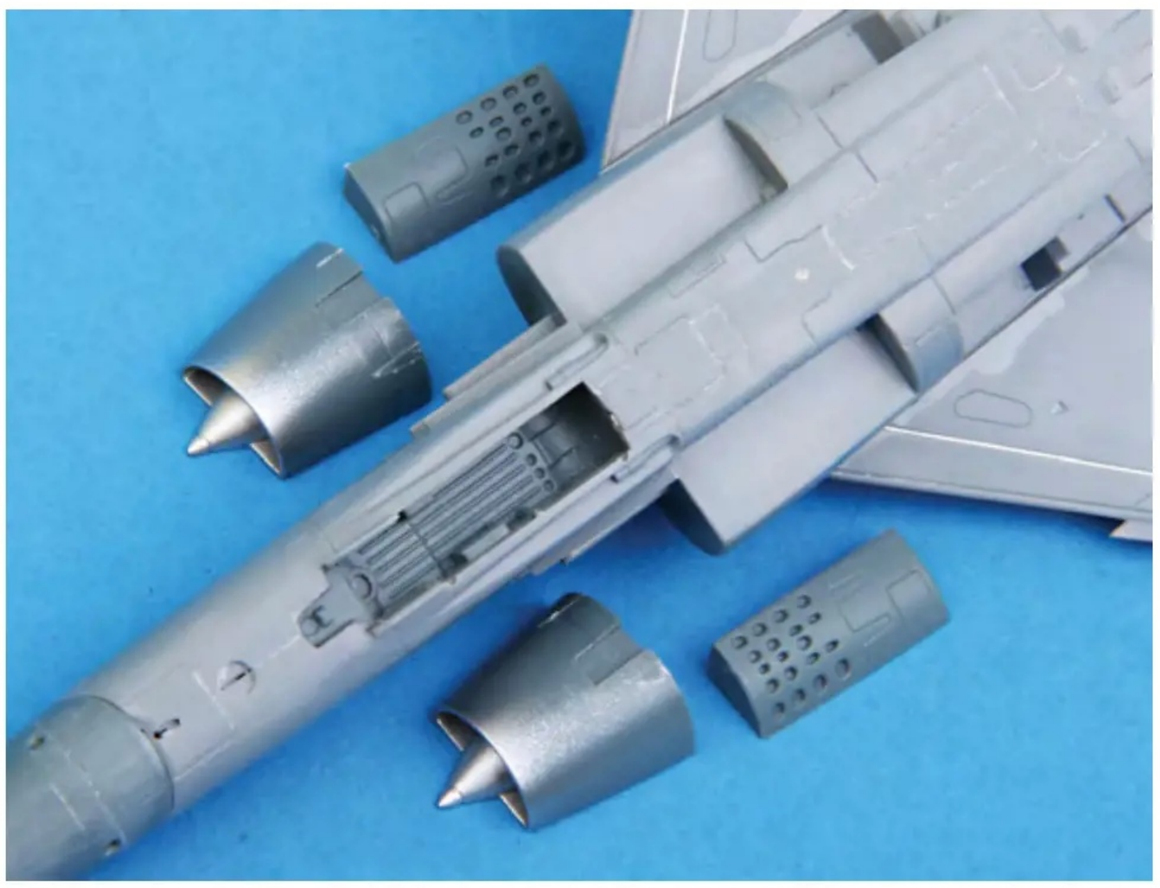
▲ The inner mating surfaces of the wing parts must be reduced slightly to ensure a flush fit.



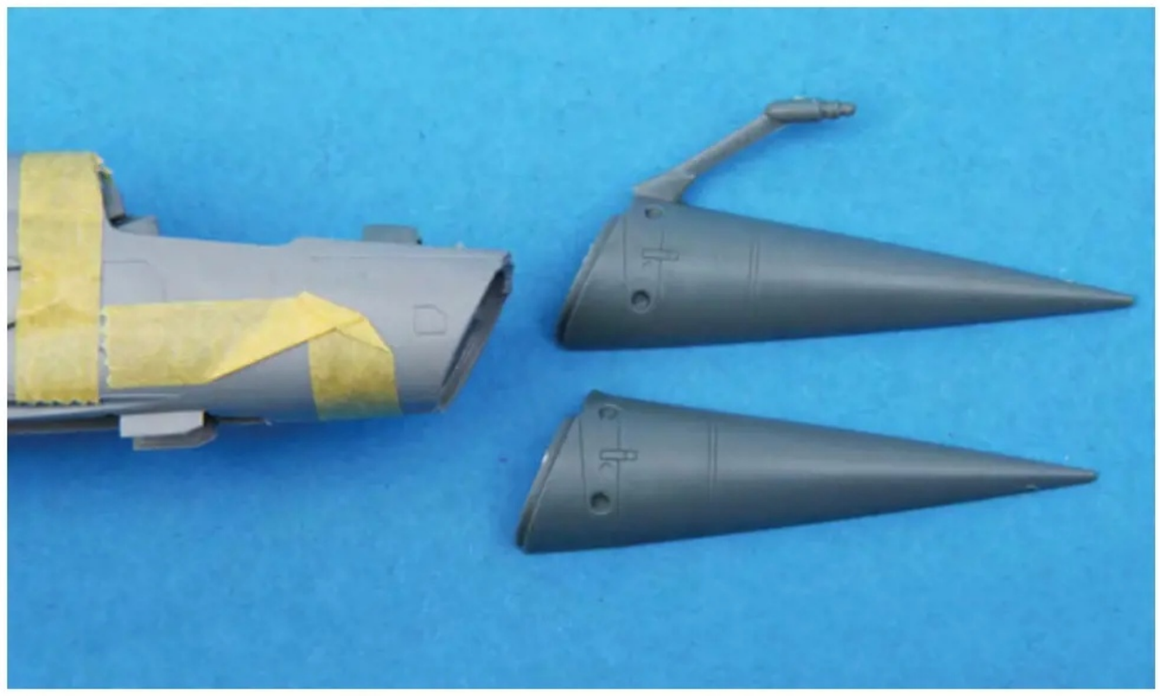
▲ The cockpit was painted NATO Black, before the main elements of the airframe were all brought together.



▲ Securing the fuselage halves together was achieved early in the build – the cockpit would be painted later.



▲ The one-piece intake assemblies were particularly impressive, as was the recessed detailing on the airbrakes.



▲ Two noses were on offer, with or without a refuelling probe. This particular airframe didn't have the probe fitted.

interior, especially in 1/72. After securing the rear bulkhead to the cockpit tub, it was fixed to the port fuselage half, before the instrument panel was also added. The intention was to paint the cockpit later, so after assembling and attaching the jet exhaust pipe, both fuselage halves were joined at this early stage using Revell Contacta Cement. Following this process can make it tricky to paint the cockpit, but it also gives you a real head start on the build, because the glue is already hardening on the fuselage joins while other parts of the model receive attention.

Nose job

Two noses are included, one 'clean' and the other with a fixed air-refuelling probe. Reference photos showed this particular aircraft didn't have the probe fitted at the 1994 Tiger Meet, so the other part was selected. The wing halves went together fairly well, although minor reduction of the inner mating surfaces was required, achieved via judicious sanding. As test-fitting the major parts of the airframe progressed, it became clear the tailfin locating tabs needed trimming, and the locating holes for the horizontal stabilisers also had to be enlarged with a pin vice.

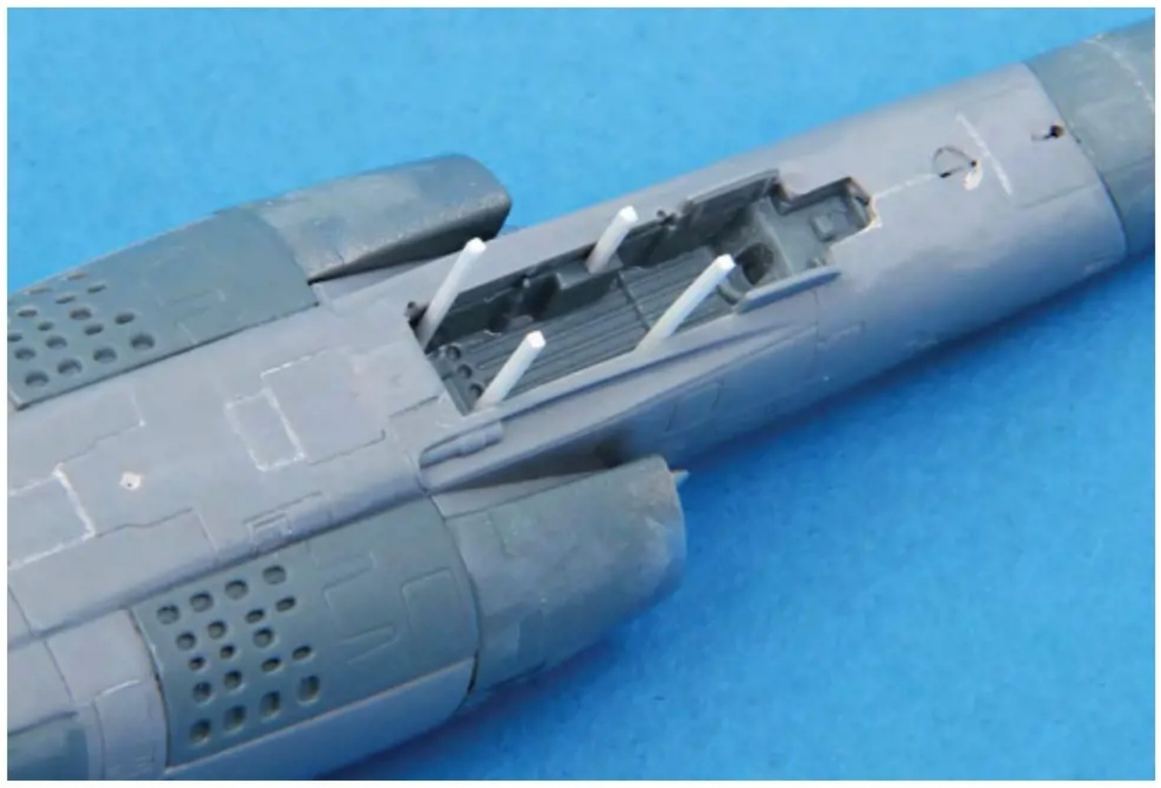
FRENCH LIVERIES

Special Hobby provides marking for four French airframes in the kit, these being identical to the earlier 2018 boxing:

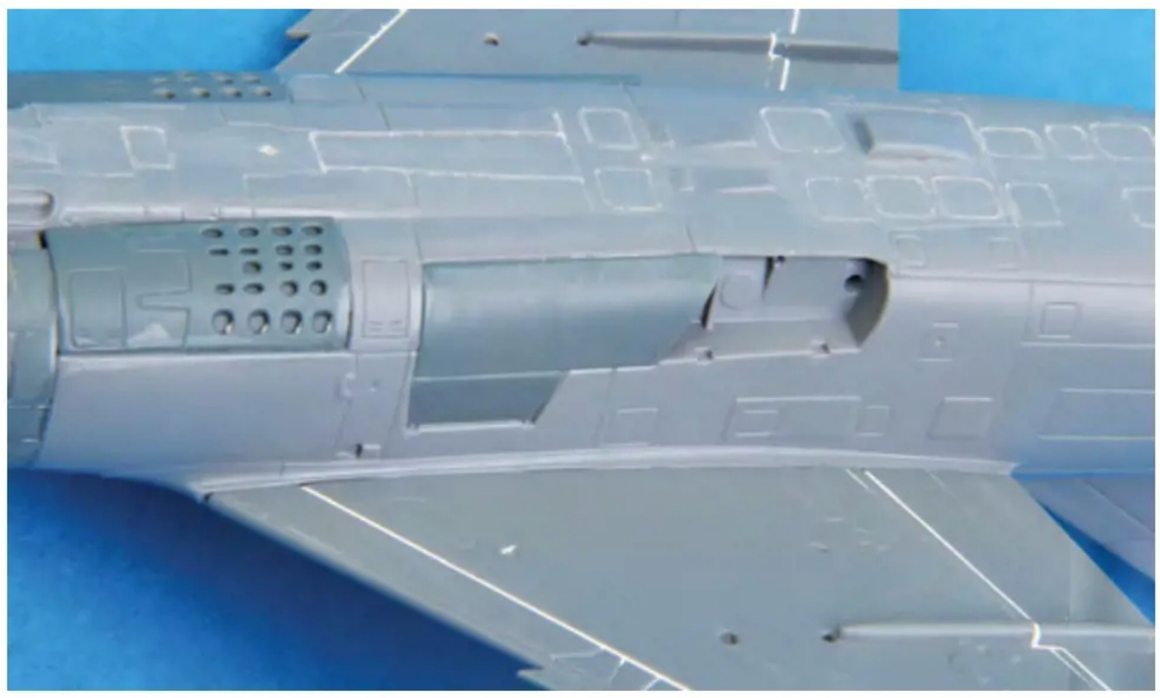
- F.1C, 46 12-YE, EC 1/12 'Cambresis', BA103 Cambrai Epinoy, 1979.
- F.1C, 84 12-ZF, EC 3/12 'Cornouaille', BA103 Cambrai Epinoy, 1979
- F.1C-200, 206 5-OA, EC 2/5 'Ile-de-France', BA115 Orange Caritat, 1981
- F.1C-200, 201 30-LA, EC 4/30 'Vexin', Ambouli, Dijbouti, 1994

SYHART DECALS

French decal company Syhart (www.syhartdecal.fr) has produced an excellent set of decals (72-090) suited for the Special Hobby kit, representing a stunning Mirage F.1C from the 1994 Tiger Meet, which was used in this feature:
• F.1C, 50 12-YA, EC 1/12 'Cambresis', Tiger Meet 1994



▲ Square plastic rods were inserted into the nosewheel bay, then trimmed to fit in readiness for attaching the closed rear section of the undercarriage door.



▲ Several rounds of sanding and trimming were needed before the forward main undercarriage bay doors would fit flush with the surrounding fuselage.

Separate inserts were provided for the airbrake assemblies, while the intakes were cleverly slide-moulded as single pieces. Although these were initially painted with Alclad ALC-101 Aluminium, it was later decided to make intake blanks out of plastic card, so the painting proved ultimately unnecessary.

Paint it black

The cockpit received Tamiya XF-69 NATO Black, before being varnished with Alclad ALC-600 Aqua Gloss, so the instrument panel decal could be applied. As is nearly always the case with kit cockpit decals, trimming was required for a proper fit. The finish was then muted with a coat of Galeria Matt Acrylic Varnish, diluted 60:40 thinner to varnish. The thinner comprised an equal blend of deionised water and isopropyl alcohol, but I added the water first to stop the alcohol from producing any chemical shock to the neat varnish. Next, dry-brushing with Revell 47 Mouse Matt Grey was applied on the raised console and rear bulkhead detail.

Although the option to have all the undercarriage doors open was provided, reference photos show several are closed when a Mirage F.1 is parked, and I wanted to represent this on the model. After careful sanding, it was possible to get the relevant main gear bay doors shut, but the nose bay was somewhat more difficult. It became clear that a supporting internal structure was vital, so columns of square-section plastic rod were added and, once set, it was possible to trim them back with a scalpel until the rear nosewheel bay door would sit flush with the fuselage surface.

Horizontal stabilisers were left off for ease of painting and, once the entire airframe had been assembled and the glue had been left to harden for at least two weeks, all the filling, sanding and scribing took place. My weapon of choice for filler was Milliput Super Fine White. As ever, it can be applied to panel joins and rubbed smooth with damp cotton buds for those locations where a natural panel line is required. After masking the canopy, it was time for priming. I've recently started using Hycote Grey Plastic Primer and it works marvellously straight from the can. The finish is smooth and it's not prone to running or crazing. Several areas needed remedial filling and sanding and, with this achieved, the surrounding areas of damaged primer were wet-sanded with 1,000-grade wet 'n' dry' abrasive paper from Klingspor, before polishing with a wet 3,600-grade micromesh cloth. This helped to feather the edges between the sanded bare plastic and primer, so no obvious 'ridging' would appear. These areas were re-primed with XF-54

▲ Milliput Superfine White was used for filling and neatening panel joins in various places across the airframe.

▲ After priming, remedial filling and re-priming, it was time for the display aircraft's striking livery.

"Special Hobby's 1/72 Mirage F.1 builds reasonably well and displays a pleasing level of detail"

Dark Sea Grey, which meant it was time to start painting perhaps the most outlandish scheme I've ever attempted.

Tiger, tiger... burning bright!

Tamiya's XF-2 Flat White was initially sprayed all over the airframe, in preparation for the main event: tiger orange! During the course of my research, I studied a large number of photos of this particular aircraft.

The main colour seemed to vary from a golden yellow-orange to a rather deeper orange hue. After much perusing of books, magazines and the internet, it reached the point where deciding on which colour interpretation to use was starting to drive me slightly mad! It has also to be remembered that, in 1994, all photos were taken on film, which had to be developed, adding to the tonal variations.

TIGERS GALORE

1/72
Model Maker Decals (www.modelmaker.com.pl)
D72196 F-16D, Greek Air Force, Tiger Meet 2016

Babibi Decals (www.babibimodel.com)
DBT-01405 F-16C, Turkish Air Force, Tiger Meet 2015

1/48
Syhart decals (www.syhartdecal.fr)
SY48114 Phantom FGR.2, RAF, Tiger Meet 1992

DreamModel (DreamModel Facebook)
DM0803 Rafale B, French Air Force, Tiger Meet 2009

1/32
Syhart decals (www.syhartdecal.fr)
SY32067 F-104G, Belgian Air Force, Tiger Meet 1978

Model Maker Decals (www.modelmaker.com.pl)
D32090 EF-18 Hornet, Spanish Air Force, Tiger Meet 2016

Ultimately, I opted for a 10:1 mix of XF-3 Flat Yellow and XF-1 Flat Red. Retrospectively, though, I suspect I should have added more yellow to the blend.

Reference photos indicated the upper/lower demarcation line to be reasonably soft, so I wanted to spray the

▲ Flat White was applied all over the airframe to begin the painting process, as this would be the underside colour.

▲ A home-made orange mix was sprayed freehand to create the soft demarcation between the upper and lower colours.

“The main colour seemed to vary from a golden yellow-orange to a rather deeper orange hue”

orange freehand. The key was to airbrush the edges with a highly diluted mix, perhaps 80:20 thinner to paint (I prefer isopropyl alcohol for Tamiya paints), then back-fill from the line, before using a thicker ratio for area coverage. However, painting was trickybecause of the strong contrast between the upper and lower colours, meaning any overspray or mistakes would be painfully obvious. Ultimately, this led to several rounds of irritating touch-ups and corrections.

With the orange and white areas complete, the airframe was sprayed with Aqua Gloss to protect the finish, before the radome was masked and sprayed NATO Black. Following yet more gloss, the airframe was masked to allow the wheel wells to receive ALC-101 Aluminium. Next, homemade oil washes were applied to the model, with a light grey on the undersides and an orange-brown hue everywhere else. These were fairly thick, to avoid the different colours running into one another.

AFTERMARKET PRODUCTS

Czech Master Kits (www.cmkkits.com)
Martin-Baker Mk.4 seat

Stripes, stripes, stripes

The decal sheet for this model was supplied by Syhart and it was simply excellent. The multitude of tiger stripes were well printed and clearly labelled in the comprehensive instructions, which made a complex and time-consuming job much more fun than it could have been otherwise. Just minor amounts of trimming on a small number of the stripes was required and, once completed, the whole airframe was glossed. The next stage was to apply certain other decals over the top of the stripes where needed, such as the unit emblems on the tail. After protecting the decals with more varnish, several stripes were neatened with Vallejo’s 70.950 Black. Again, gloss varnish sealed the completed work.

Even the undercarriage legs had tiger stripes, but these had to be brush-painted instead of decaled.

The exhaust nozzle was kept separate for ease of paintingAfter finishing the interior with an equal mix of XF-64 Red Brown and XF-1 Flat Black, the exterior was coated with Aqua Gloss. After masking the interior burnt black/brown colour, the outside was sprayed with ALC-101 Aluminium. More masking ensued, before a diluted mixture of the same Red Brown/ Flat Black mix was used to build the colour according to avalable reference pictures.

Tiger Meet seat

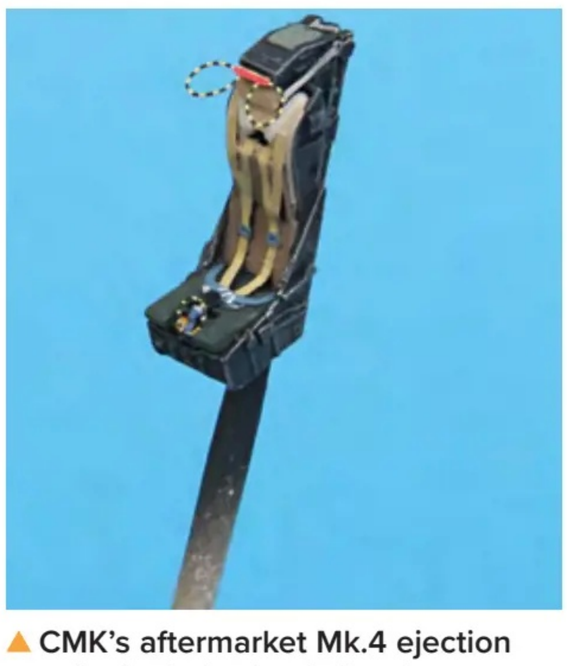
I’ll often replace kit seats with resin or 3D-printed offerings, not because all kit seats are bad, but because aftermarket ones are generally superior and they are a time-saving addition.

▲ With painting complete and several coats of gloss applied, the scheme was certainly eyecatching.

▲ Comparing this picture with the previous one shows just what a difference a subtle oil wash – in this case an orange-brown shade – can make to a model.

▲ The Syhart decals were absolutely brilliant and behaved superbly. The instructions were incredible too.

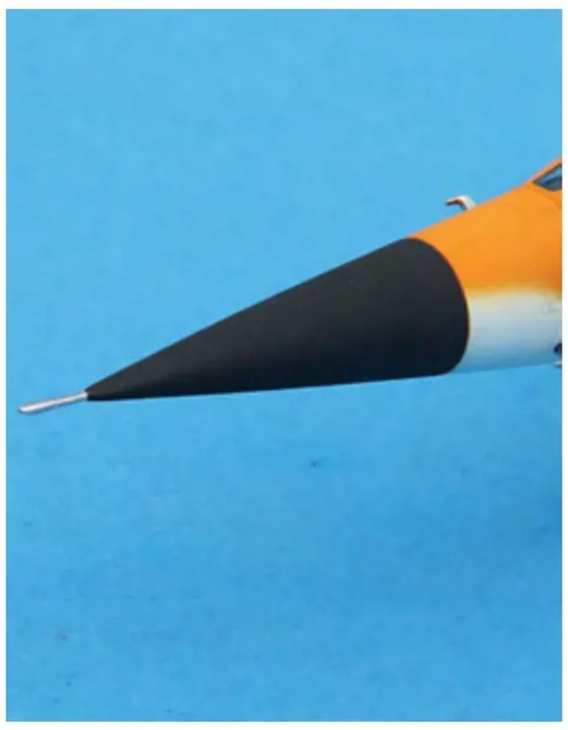
▲ After coating the outside of the exhaust can with Alclad Aluminium, a Red-Brown/Flat Black provided tonal difference.



▲ CMK's aftermarket Mk.4 ejection seat looked absolutely lovely once assembled, painted and weathered. The firing handle came from an Eduard PE fret.

▲ Painting the white antenna areas on the tail fin was particularly challenging. Ultimately, it fell to careful brushwork and several thin coats to produce the desired effect.

▲ All the careful masking and spraying on the exhaust nozzle paid off and, with the coverings removed, the final effect was reasonably close to the initial aim.



▲ Although the kit came with an integrally moulded pitot tube, there was no way it wasn't going to get broken. Having carefully removed it earlier, it was reinstated at the end.

▲ Reference photos indicated that the intake blanks were suitably adorned with orange for Tiger Meet 94. These items were scratch-built from plastic card and sprayed the same orange as the model.

▲ Even the undercarriage legs received the tiger treatment. The brush-painted stripes applied earlier in the build can be seen to good effect.

Here, a CMK Martin-Baker Mk.4 seat was acquired (72253) and the quality of this aftermarket resin item was excellent. After carefully attaching the included photo-etched (PE) seatbelts (the tiny straps around the headbox sides were replaced with Tamiya tape), the seat was sprayed XF-69 NATO Black before various acrylic colours were used to 'dress' the cushions and harness. Next, dry-brushing with Revell's 47 Mouse Matt Grey and chipping with a Silver Prismacolor pencil followed, before apre-painted Eduard PE firing handle completed the ejection seat.

After mounting the kit on its undercarriage, more Galleria Matt varnish was sprayed to mute the airframe's gloss finish. Final assembly was a mercifully simple process. There were no stores or pylons to deal with and most of the undercarriage doors were already shut, so the amount of parts that needed attaching was about as small as it could be. After securing the ejection seat, the canopy and pitot tube were attached to bring the build to a pleasing conclusion.

Feline fun

This was a really enjoyable project. Special Hobby's 1/72 Mirage F.1 builds reasonably well and displays a pleasing level of detail. However, the real standout was the decal set from Syhart. It was absolutely brilliant and the comprehensive instructions were top-notch, which took away some the guesswork that comes with less well-rendered guides. I'm still not sure if I managed to get the orange colour quite right, though – it's not a bad match for some of the reference photos I've seen, but it's less so for others Either way, this was a fun build and the decals from Syhart come highly recommended. AMW

MATERIALS AT A GLANCE

Alclad II (https://alclad2.com)
ALC-101 Aluminium
ALC-106 White Aluminium
ALC-600 Aqua Gloss

Citadel (www.citadelcolour.com)
Runefang Steel
Iron Breaker

Gorilla Glue (www.gorillaglue.com)
Gorilla epoxy

Hycote (www.hycote.co.uk)
Grey Plastic Primer

Microscale (www.microscale.com)
Micro Kristal Klear

Milliput (www.milliput.com)
Milliput Superfine White

Prismacolor (www.prismacolor.com)
Silver Verithin Colour Pencil VT753

Revell (www.revell.de)
Revell Contacta Cement
Mouse Matt Grey 47

Tamiya (www.hobbyco.net)
Extra Thin Cement
XF-1 Flat Black
XF-2 Flat White
XF-3 Flat Yellow
XF-7 Flat Red
XF-27 Black Green
XF-54 Dark Sea Grey
XF-55 Deck Tan
XF-59 Desert Yellow
XF-60 Dark Yellow
XF-64 Red Brown
XF-69 NATO Black
XF-72 Brown JGSDF
XF-73 Dark Green JGSDF
XF-78 Wooden Deck Tan
XF-85 Rubber Black

Vallejo (www.creativemodels.co.uk)
70.950 Black
70.951 Flat White

Winsor & Newton (www.winsornewton.com)
Galeria Matt Varnish

Stripes

Mark Attrill was NATO Tiger Association public affairs officer from 1997-2008. Here, he offers reference photos and a brief account of this organisation, known for its colourful aircraft schemes

# of all nations

NATO's Tiger Association can trace its roots to the early 1960s and a request from the French government. The goal was to improve military co-operation between France and the US, which was embraced by the latter's Commander in Chief European Command in a directive to all units under that umbrella. Coincidentally, 74(F) Squadron at RAF Coltishall in Norfolk was renewing an old friendship with its neighbour, the 79th Fighter Squadron, based at RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk. The 79th FS quickly set about finding a common theme that could link fighter squadrons from all three nations – and discovered that the Escadron de Chasse 1/12 'Cambrésis' of the French Armée de l'Air shared a tiger squadron emblem with the two UK-based units. In July 1961, 74(F) Squadron and EC 1/12 were invited to Woodbridge for what became the first 'Tiger Meet'. The event was deemed a success and word spread quickly throughout NATO air arms; the following

French Dassault Mirage 2000-5F (44/118-EQ) of EC 05/330 'Cote d'Argent', home-based at BA-118 Mont-de-Marsan, was photographed at Cambrai-Epinoy during NTM 2011. The aircraft wore special markings to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the NATO Tiger Association. EC 05/330 joined the association in 1986 and was re-designated EC E01/30 in 2016, to reflect the mainly experimental nature of its work. Chris Clifford

year, a second meet was hosted at Woodbridge, attracting eight squadrons representing six nations. The Belgian Air Force hosted the first continental Tiger Meet event at Kleine Brogel in 1963 and since then, the NATO Tiger Association has blossomed with the Tiger Meet becoming a firmly established event for members... as well as global military aviation aficionados.

Multi-faceted approach

Since the very first instalment, the main objectives of the Tiger Association have been to promote solidarity among member nations, achieve and maintain strong personal ties, create a better understanding of NATO military objectives and to develop unit interoperability. Since its creation more than 60 years ago, both the association and its annual showcase event have faced many challenges – but in true 'Tiger Spirit' these difficulties have been embraced and overcome. The golden years of the 1960s gave way to a period of austerity in the 1970s, due to the global oil crisis, which placed severe operational restrictions on NATO air forces and reduced the annual event to no more than a weekend 'fly-in' with the nominated host. The decade did produce one highlight; in 1977, the Tiger Meet was hosted by the International Air Tattoo at RAF Greenham Common, where the association was presented with the Silver Tiger trophy, to be awarded to the best squadron

▲ **Mil Mi-24V *Hind* of 331 Squadron, Czech Air Force, during NATO Tiger Meet (NTM) 2004, which was hosted by AG.51 at Schleswig-Jagel, Northern Germany, in September 2004. No.331 Squadron joined the NATO Tiger Association in 1997, gaining full membership status during the 40th anniversary celebrations at Kleine Brogel Air Base in 2001. The Czech *Hinds* provided a valuable Joint Personnel Recovery role during the active flying element of NTM 2004, which hosted a number of simulated Composite Air Operations.** All photos Mark Attrill unless otherwise stated

▲ **The US-based 141st Air Refueling Squadron of the New Jersey Air National Guard has been an honorary member of the NATO Tiger Association since 1984. As such, it is entitled to participate in the event whenever the opportunity allows. The unit deployed a Boeing KC-135E Stratotanker to NTM 2004, which bore this spectacular tiger's head motif on the forward fuselage.**

▼ **This F-16D Fighting Falcon of 192 Filo, Turkish Air Force, was seen during 2011's NATO Tiger Meet, hosted by Escadron de Chasse 1/12 'Cambrésis' at Cambrai-Epinoy, France. The latter unit first joined the NATO Tiger Association in 1980 when it flew Lockheed F-104G Starfighters.** Chris Clifford

▲ Fliegerstaffel 11 of the Swiss Air Force has been a long-standing supporter of the NATO Tiger Association since 1981, and secured full membership status in 2004 despite Switzerland not being a member of NATO. The unit has, over the years, presented stunning tiger-themed tail art on its F/A-18C Hornets including this example, which participated in the 2007 NATO Tiger Meet at Orland, Norway.

▲ Belgian Air Force unit 31 Squadron was one of the earliest members of the NATO Tiger Association (NTA) and has been a stalwart supporter ever since, hosting a record number of Tiger Meets. The unit can always be relied on to produce at least one specially marked F-16AM for the annual event... although, in this particular case, one of its more subdued examples is shown. However, the unit's overall 'Tiger Spirit' did gain it the coveted Silver Tiger trophy during NTM 2007.

▲ An F-16C Block 50 Fighting Falcon, operated by 192 Filo of the Turkish Air Force, was one of two aircraft that sported specially themed markings for 'Arctic Tiger', the 2007 edition of the NATO Tiger Meet at Orland Air Base, Norway. The two aircraft sported identical arctic-focused caricatures, against a red or blue backdrop, respectively.

▲ A specially marked Dassault Mirage 2000C '12-YB' of Escadron de Chasse 1/12 'Cambrésis', home-based at Cambrai-Epinoy – and at the time the last remaining founding member of the NTA – was spotted at Orland Air Base in September 2007. Sadly, the unit was disbanded five years later following the closure of its Cambrai home, although the tiger traditions associated with SPA 162, proudly live on with the transfer to EC 01/7, flying the Dassault Rafale C from BA-118 Mont-de-Marsan.

▲ This Tornado ECR (46+48) of JaboG 321 of the German Air Force, home-based at Lechfeld Air Base in Bavaria, flew to central Norway for NTM 2007. Over the years, JaBoG 321 has been responsible for several truly spectacular colour schemes, now sadly missed following the unit's disbandment in 2012.

during each subsequent Tiger Meet. The first unit to win this coveted award was 439 Squadron of the Canadian Armed Forces. It was perhaps fitting it was this unit that was largely responsible for resurrecting the active flying element of the Tiger Meet, after the association had reached its nadir in 1982. Further challenges emerged in the late 1980s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, which resulted in large-scale reductions within NATO and the loss of several well-established Tiger Squadrons.

Building blocks

Demonstrating its trademark spirit, the association fought back and reviewed the original concept of the Tiger Meet, to develop a more operationally focused annual air exercise, which would appeal to NATO member states. The initiative worked, with senior air force leadership recognising the value of the association, citing its success in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm and Allied Force in the 1990s. It was during these conflicts that several participating Tiger Squadrons demonstrated their skills and prowess in interoperability and complementary effects during the respective coalition air campaigns. At the same time, the association worked hard to establish links with former Warsaw Pact nations and recruited two Czech Air Force units to participate in the early 1990s. Since then, squadrons from Hungary, Poland and Slovakia have gained membership, which together with non-NATO members from Austria and Switzerland, now provides the NATO Tiger Association with a rich multinational tapestry.

Dassault Super Etendard '49', of the French Aeronavale's Flotille 11, sported this highly attractive overall white scheme with black tiger stripes for Arctic Tiger 2007, which was most appropriate. Many observers still puzzle over the admission to the Tiger Association of a unit that employs a seahorse motif in its insignia. The explanation is simple, though; Flotille 11 was permitted to join as it was assigned to the aircraft carrier Clemenceau, which had a tiger as its official emblem.

THE HAIRY STICK

This month, we show how to get the best out of the Starter Set acrylic paints – all with the aid of a little water and a flat brush.

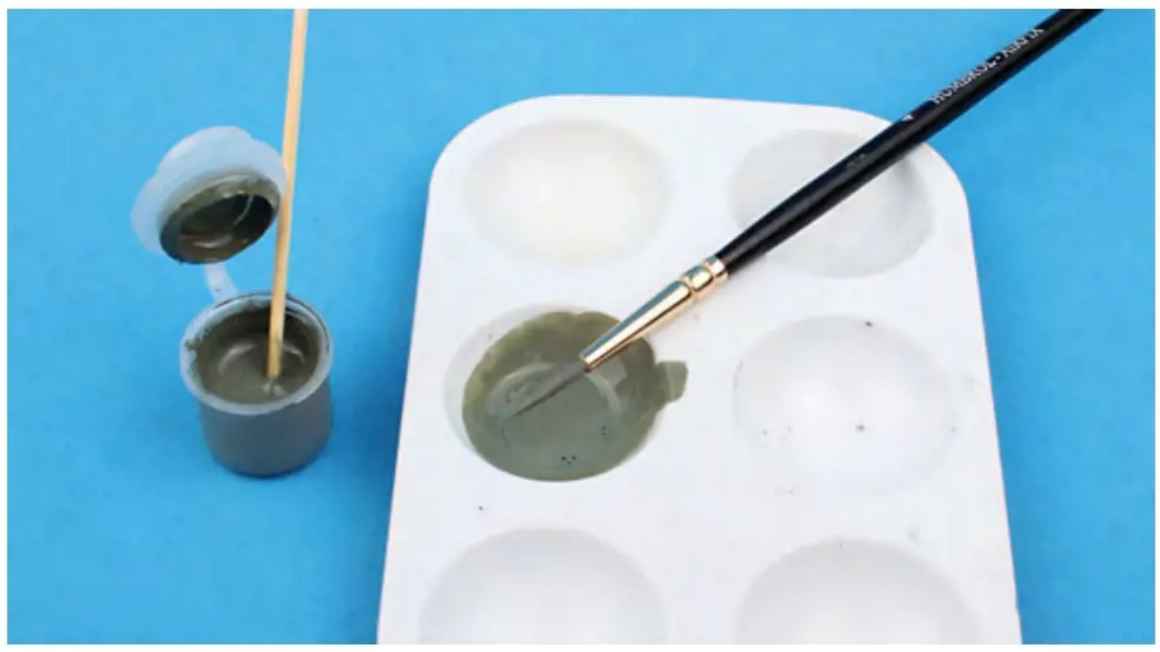
MODEL SPEC

Messerschmitt Bf 109F-4
By: Airfix
Stock Code: A55014
Scale: 1/72
Price: £11.99
Available From:
Airfix (https://uk.airfix.com)

Paint preparation

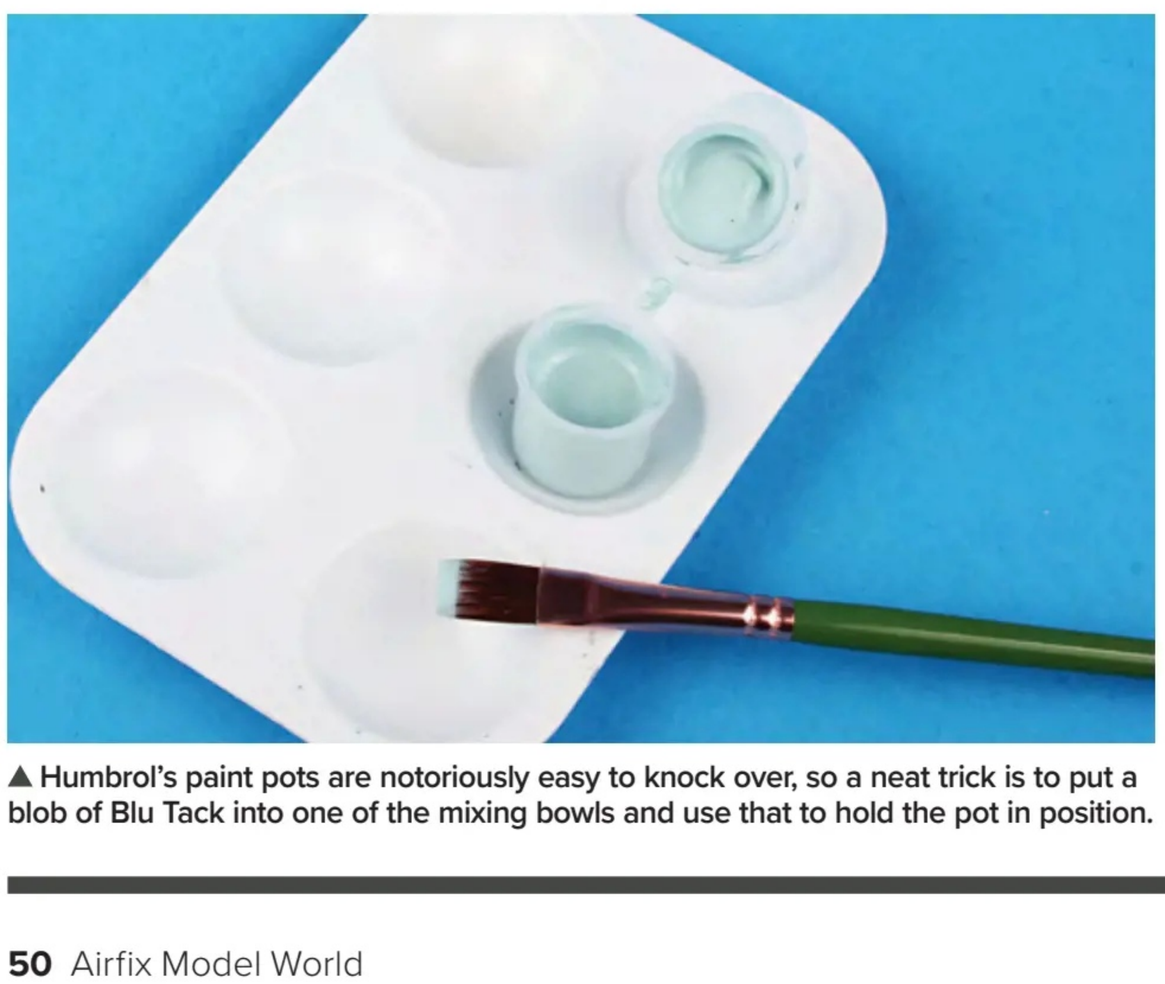
Humbrol's acrylics are provided in flip-top lidded pots and once you've opened the relevant colour, the first task is to stir the contents, as they will likely have settled. Generally, the consistency is quite thick, so the next step is to transfer paint to a mixing bowl and add water until it flows smoothly. Make sure you've washed the kit parts beforehand to remove any mould release agent, though.

While Airfix supplies a pointed brush in the Starter Set, a flat brush is better for large area coverage. Humbrol offers a great pack of these (AG4305) and one or two were used in this build. It's best working from light colours to dark, meaning the first airframe colour applied is 65 Aircraft Blue. Rather than applying one thick coat, which will take longer to dry (and encourage visible

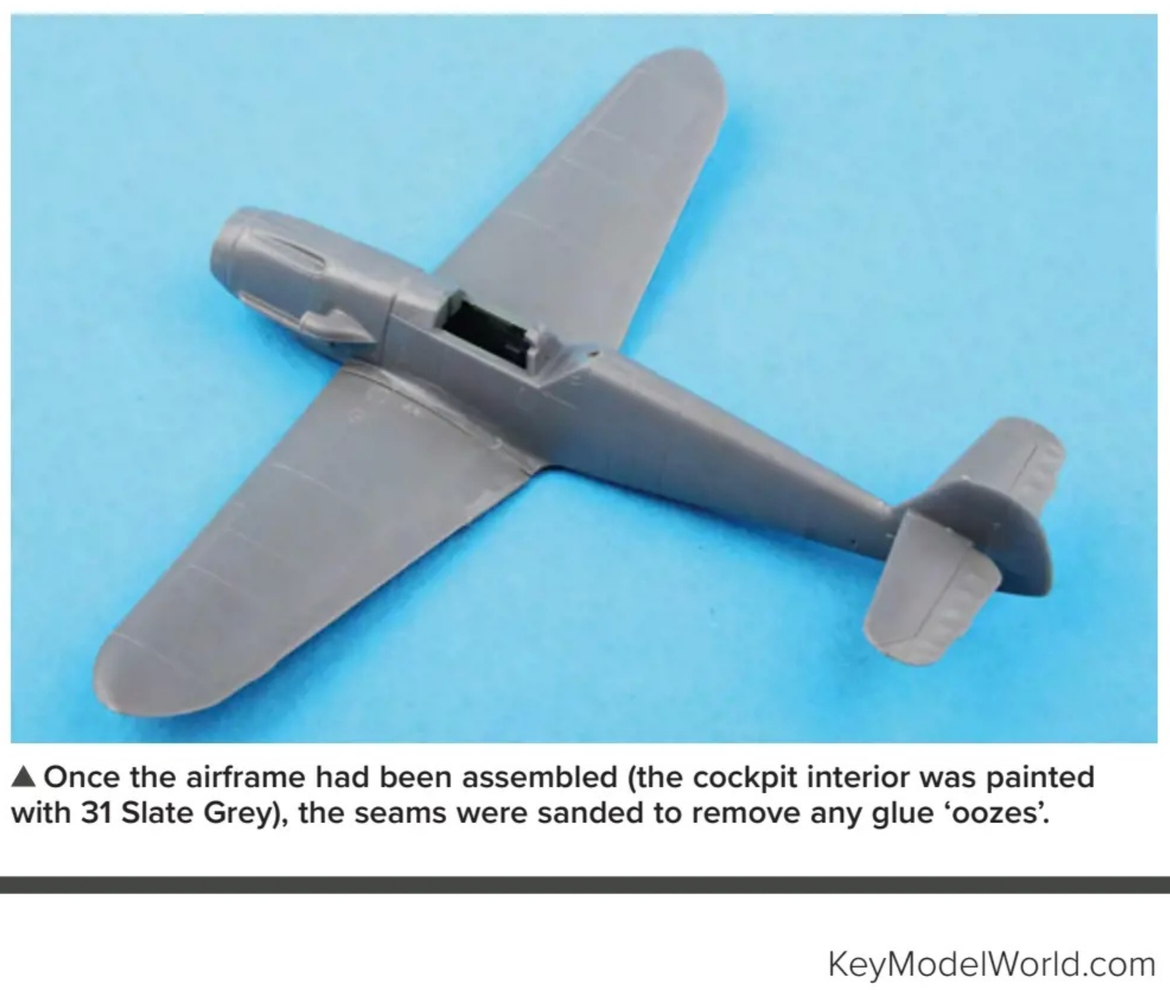


▲ After stirring the paint to ensure it was mixed properly, a small amount was transferred to a mixing bowl and diluted slightly with water.

Brush-painting is one of the first skills acquired by modellers, yet there's little guidance on how to get the best results. This month's project takes the Airfix Bf 109F-4 Starter Set (A55014), which comes on just four styrene runners (including one for the canopy). Assembly is just as simple as the Sherman, but here the main airframe is built. with the propeller and spinner, undercarriage and canopy omitted temporarily until after painting.



▲ Humbrol's paint pots are notoriously easy to knock over, so a neat trick is to put a blob of Blu Tack into one of the mixing bowls and use that to hold the pot in position.



▲ Once the airframe had been assembled (the cockpit interior was painted with 31 Slate Grey), the seams were sanded to remove any glue 'oozes'.

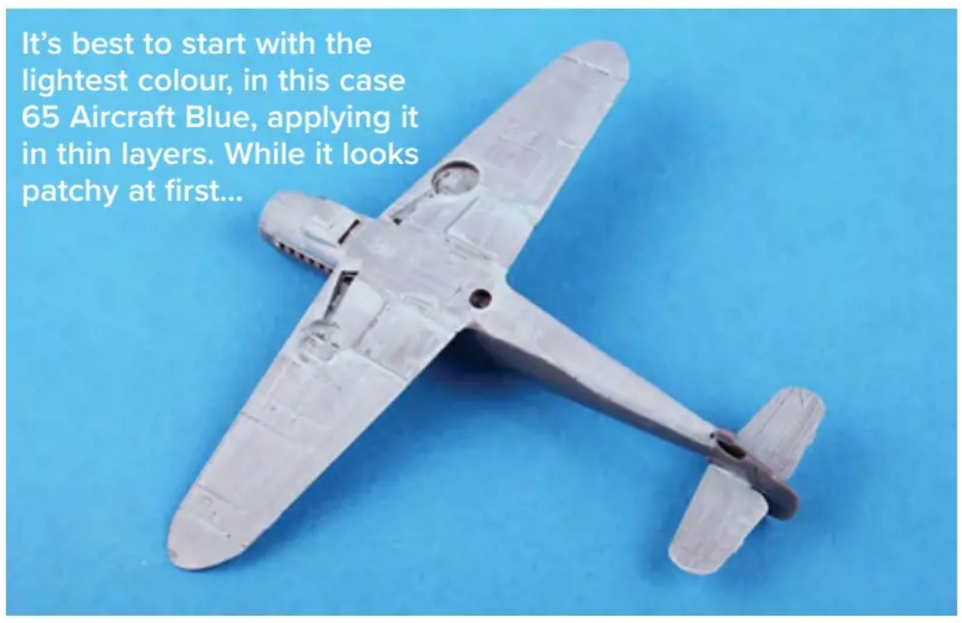
brush strikes), it's better to brush several thin layers instead. At first the results may appear less than ideal, but have patience, as the colour will build over subsequent coats. The acrylics dry quickly, so you can re-coat after approximately 30 minutes. It took four layers for a suitable result, after which 91 Black Green was thinned and readied. Being a dark colour, it covers better than the blue on dark styrene, so just two coats were needed. Detail painting was undertaken while the main airframe was drying.

Framing tricks

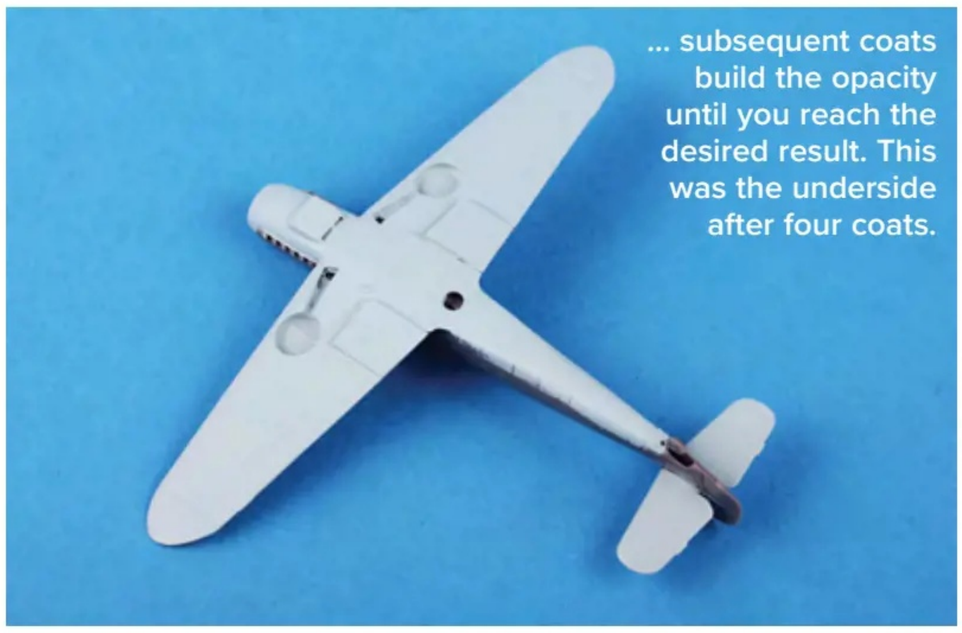
Painting canopies can be a tricky and often frustrating process. Unless you've got a properly steady hand, it's easy to get paint on the glazed sections. One solution is to paint a length of masking tape with the relevant colour and then cut strips using a steel ruler and sharp knife to apply along the frame lines. Press them down firmly once they are in position and voila!... one neatly framed canopy.

Once you're satisfied with the various sub-assemblies, they can all be brought together. It's well worth leaving the canopy until last, as this way it minimises the risk of the dreaded glue fingerprints due to excessive handling, after which the decals can be applied. It should be said that Airfix's markings are superb, with minimal silvering present in this instance and they settled well into the moulded detail. Once dry, your Bf 109F-4 model is complete. AMW

▲ On the real aircraft, there was a soft or feathered edge to the green. A simple way of creating an uneven edge is to use the very tip of the brush, pulling back from the demarcation line.

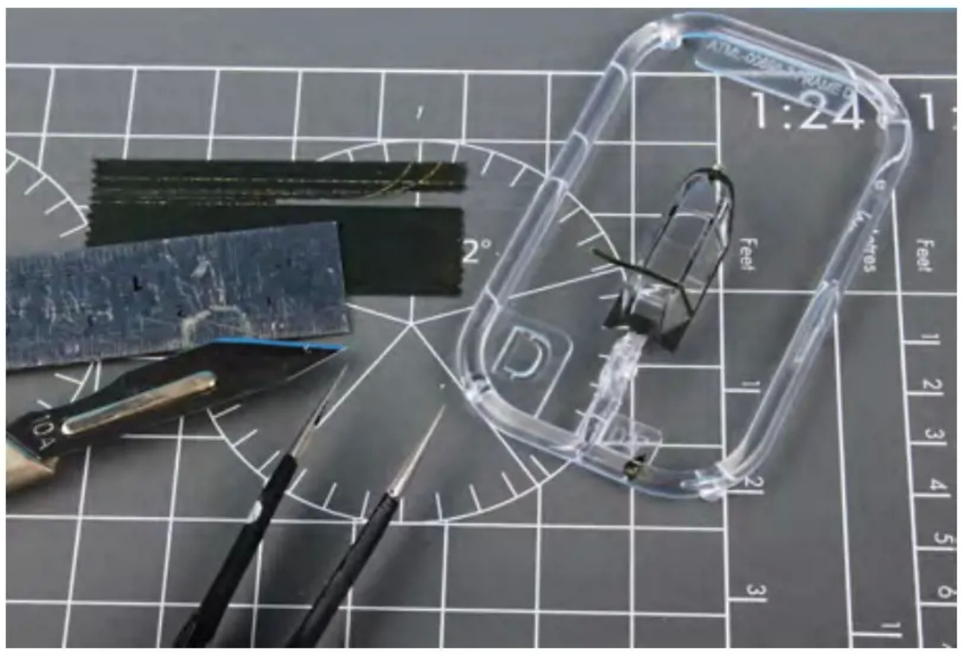


It's best to start with the lightest colour, in this case 65 Aircraft Blue, applying it in thin layers. While it looks patchy at first...



... subsequent coats build the opacity until you reach the desired result. This was the underside after four coats.

Darker colours cover well on an already dark surface, so just two layers of 91 Black Green were required.



▲ An easy way of recreating frame lines is to paint a length of masking tape with the airframe colour and cut thin strips to apply along the frame lines. Here 1mm pieces were used on the wide frames, with 0.5mm items on the thinner sections.

NEXT MONTH

We explore using masking tape to mark colour boundaries and how gloss surfaces aid decal application, using Airfix's 1/72 Shannon-class Lifeboat Starter Set.

Mikael Terfors builds a lesser-known variant of the 4x4 FWD truck and discovers a well-detailed canvas for mud and dust

Hauling ammo

The FWD Type B ammunition truck was a specialised military adaptation of the standard FWD Type B 4x4 cargo vehicle, tailored specifically for transporting munitions to the front lines. Produced by the Four-Wheel Drive Auto Company in Wisconsin, USA, this variant became a crucial component of the US Army's logistics operations in France and Belgium from late 1917 onwards.

What set the ammunition truck apart from the general variant was its reinforced flatbed body (which was often fitted with a canvas cover) designed to securely carry large quantities

MODEL SPEC

FWD Type B World War One US Ammunition Truck
By: ICM
Stock Code: 35656
Scale: 1/35
Price: £29.16
Available from: The Hobby Company (www.hobbyco.net)

▲ The main components for the chassis laid out. The flat pack construction necessitated care when aligning parts.

heavy payloads across muddy tracks, shell-pocked roads and steep inclines where horses and two-wheel-drive vehicles would fail. After the Armistice, many surplus vehicles entered the civilian market, where they proved popular as municipal service/construction vehicles.

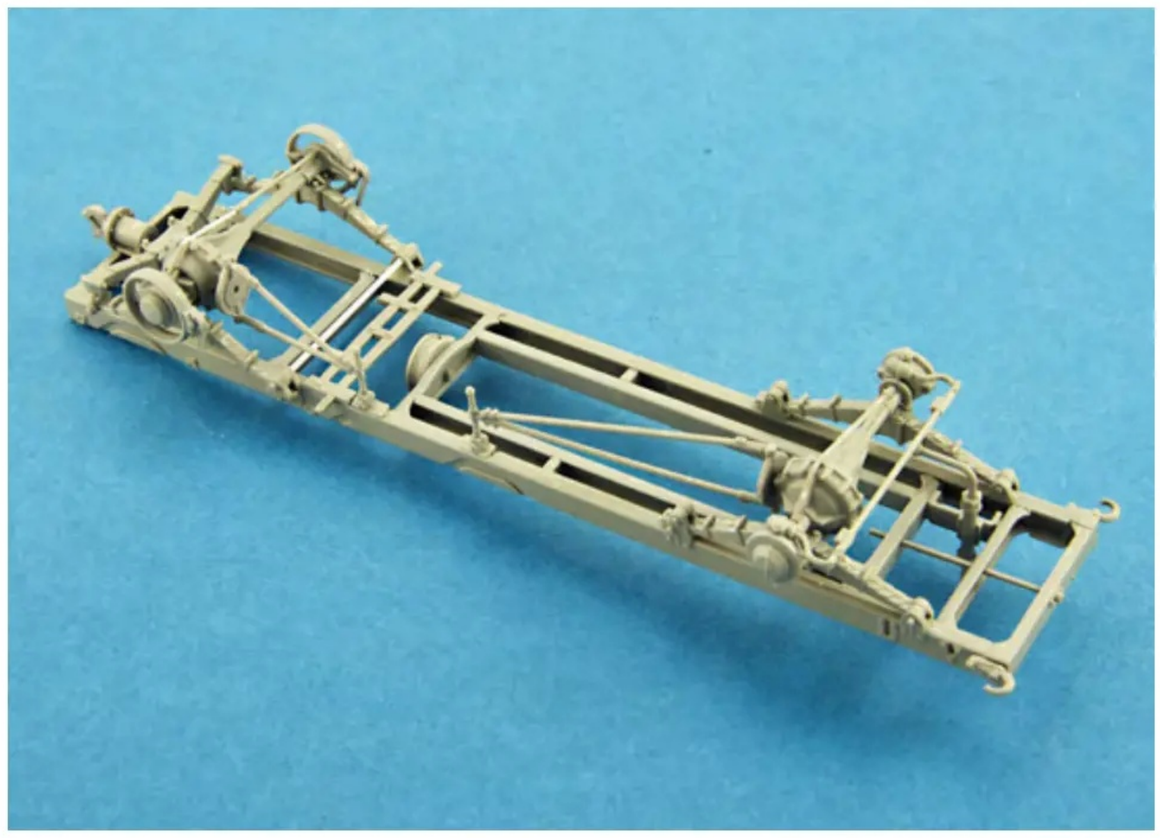
Familiar content

Despite its role during World War One, the FWD Type B Ammunition Truck is a relatively unknown subject in terms of references and kits. However, considering ICM's previous offering of the standard FWD, this addition made eminent sense, using many common parts for the chassis and drivetrain. The kit comprises five runners of light grey styrene, most of them common to the standard FWD. In fact, the whole load bed and canvas tarpaulin from the previous release are present, but most of that runner had to be discarded as just a handful of parts were relevant. Runner F contained all the new parts for the ammunition version, with the load container, tools and wheel discs. Some chassis parts were also adapted for attaching the container and were therefore included here too. In addition, there was a clear runner for the headlamps and a small decal sheet offering markings for three 1918 vehicles.

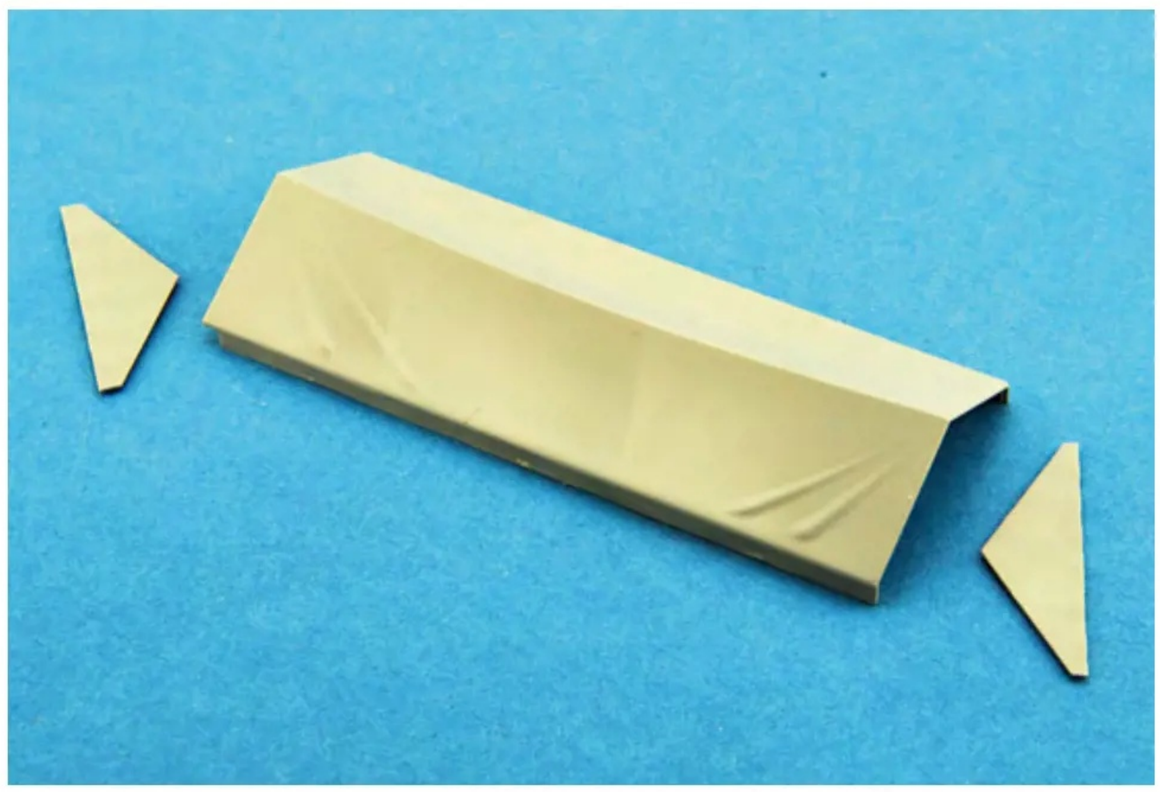
All parts were crisply moulded with minimal flash and the detail is commendable throughout. As ICM kits go, this is a typical release, with much emphasis on the construction of detailed sub-assemblies. The instructions have ICM's usual clear, step-by-step format with colour callouts referencing the firm's own paint. The suggested colour schemes are two FWDs in Olive Drab, plus the more attractive vehicle depicted on the box. Markings simply involve stencils alone.

Detailed chassis

Construction started from the bottom, with the assembly of

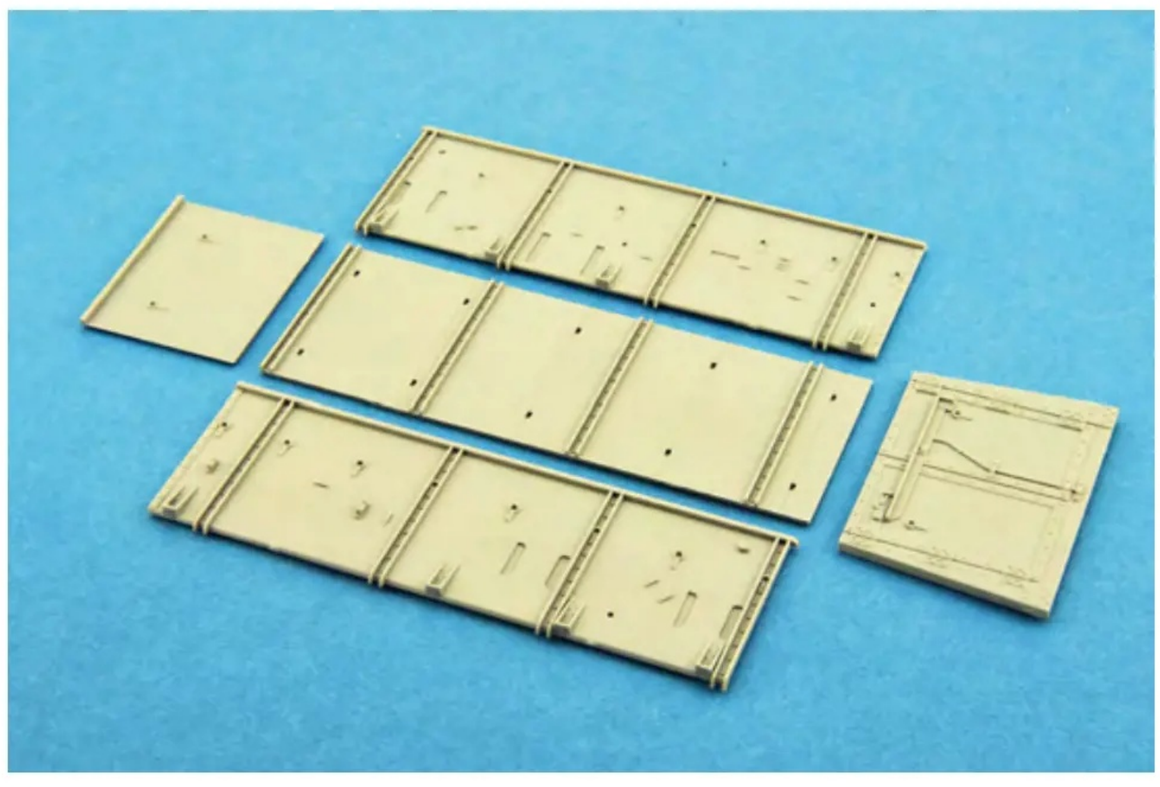


▲ The chassis completed: a small portion on the rear axle broke and was repaired with plastic rod.

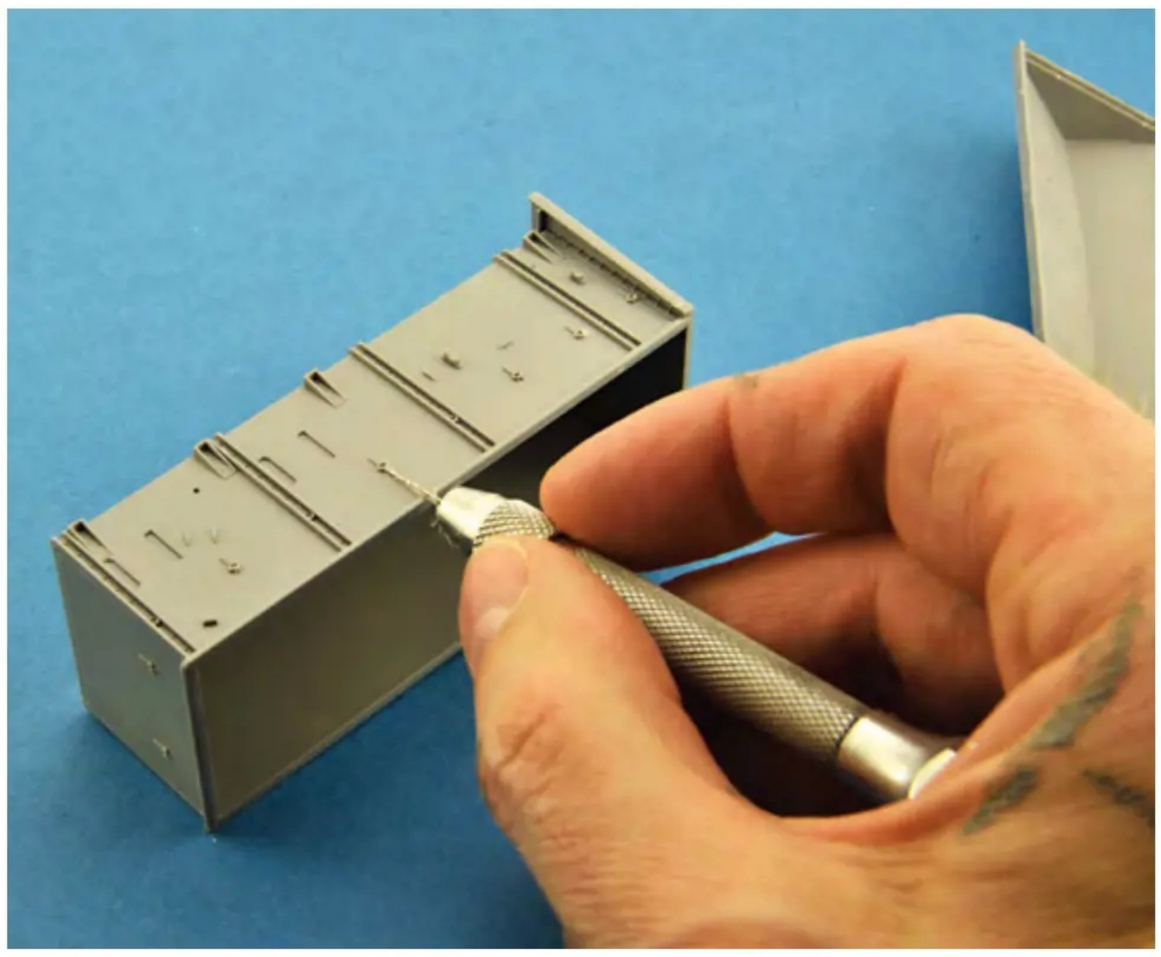


▲ In contrast with the complex chassis, the tarpaulin involved just three components.

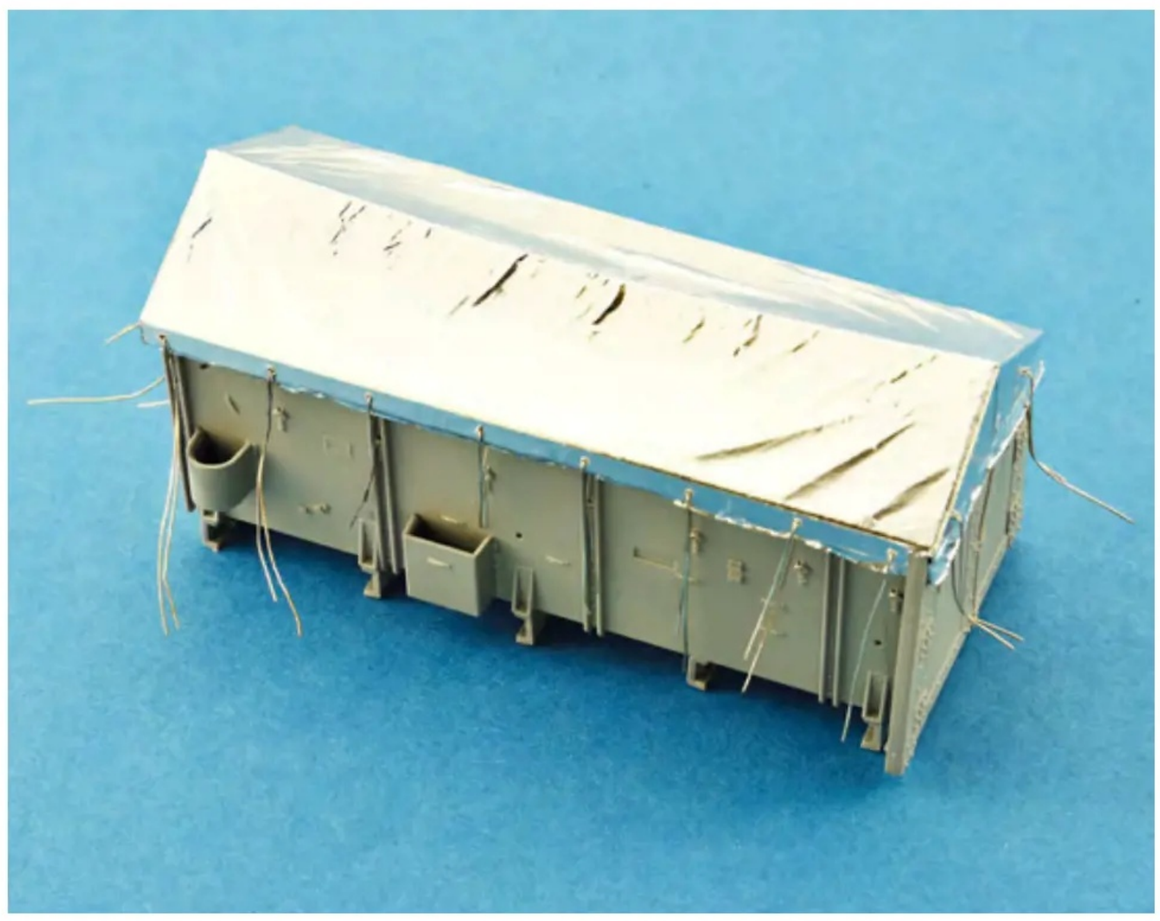
▲ The chassis went together well with positive location tabs. One of the rods was replaced with plastic card.



▲ The 'flat-pack' loading container was well detailed, with crisp moulding.



▲ To accommodate securing lines for the tarpaulin/load bed, small holes were drilled at the attachment points.



▲ For a more convincing tarpaulin, aluminium tape was attached over the plastic, creating more natural wrinkles. Then, using metal wire, the ropes securing the tarpaulin were threaded through the drilled holes.

▲ Tyres and wheel hubs required persuasion with clamps to fit properly, but filler was still needed.

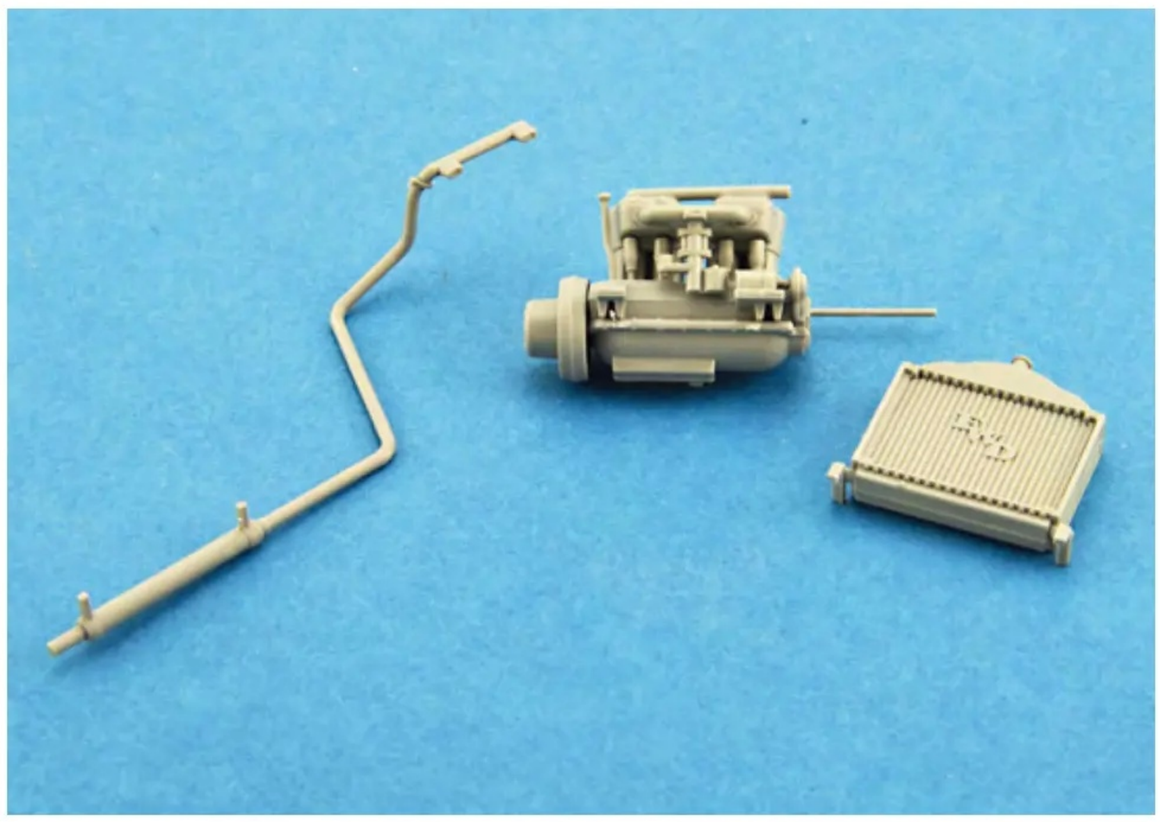
▲ The engine comprised many well-detailed parts, which needed careful construction to align.

the chassis and sub-frame for the engine and drivetrain. Chassis parts come as a ‘flat pack’. Though the mating surfaces had positive location points, it still needed careful construction, with attention being paid to getting the correct parts in place and aligning them correctly. The suspension, featuring several leaf springs, was installed with the chassis, as were several other details such as towing hooks.

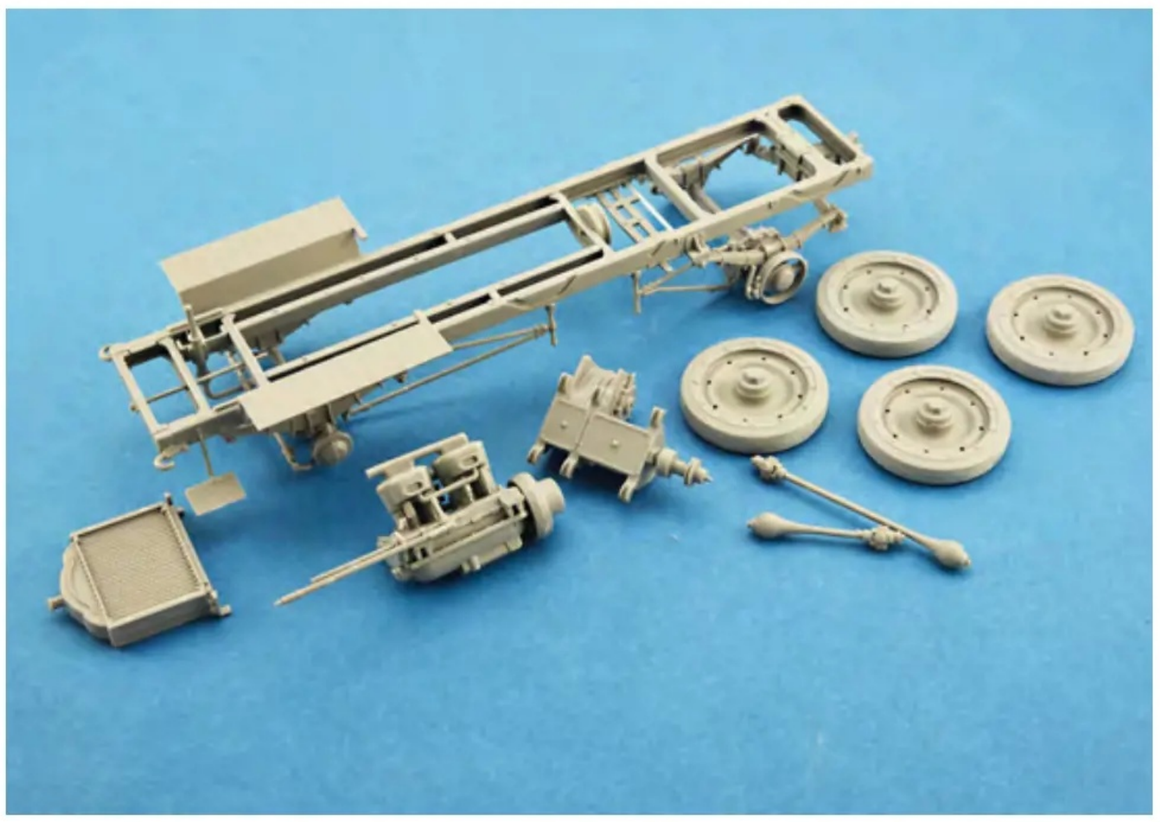
The next step concerned th addition of the vehicle’s axles, plus driving plates and connector rods. Here, some of the finely moulded fragile tubing broke in places while handling the parts. To remedy this, plastic card and rod were used for repairs. Next came wheel assembly, which was slightly challenging. Small clamps were used to achieve a snug fit, but despite this there was a noticeable gap between the wheel halves, which needed filler. The finished wheels were left off the chassis, though, to ease painting.

The radiator was assembled next, along with the engine. The powerplant featured a surprisingly large number of parts, which built into a detailed replica of the real thing. The only obvious items missing were electrical leads and perhaps a degree of plumbing – a testament to ICM’s meticulous approach. Detailing and painting the engine would not be necessary, though. Apart from the lower sump, which would only be visible if you inverted the model, the rest of the engine would eventually be hidden beneath the bonnet. However, with creative cutting, it would be possible to remove the engine hatches. Therefore, the engine was constructed in full, but just dry-fitted in position at this stage.

“ICM has made a habit of surprising the modelling community with lesser-known subjects”



▲ The completed engine and exhaust with the radiator. Note the finely represented ‘FWD’ logo on the grille.



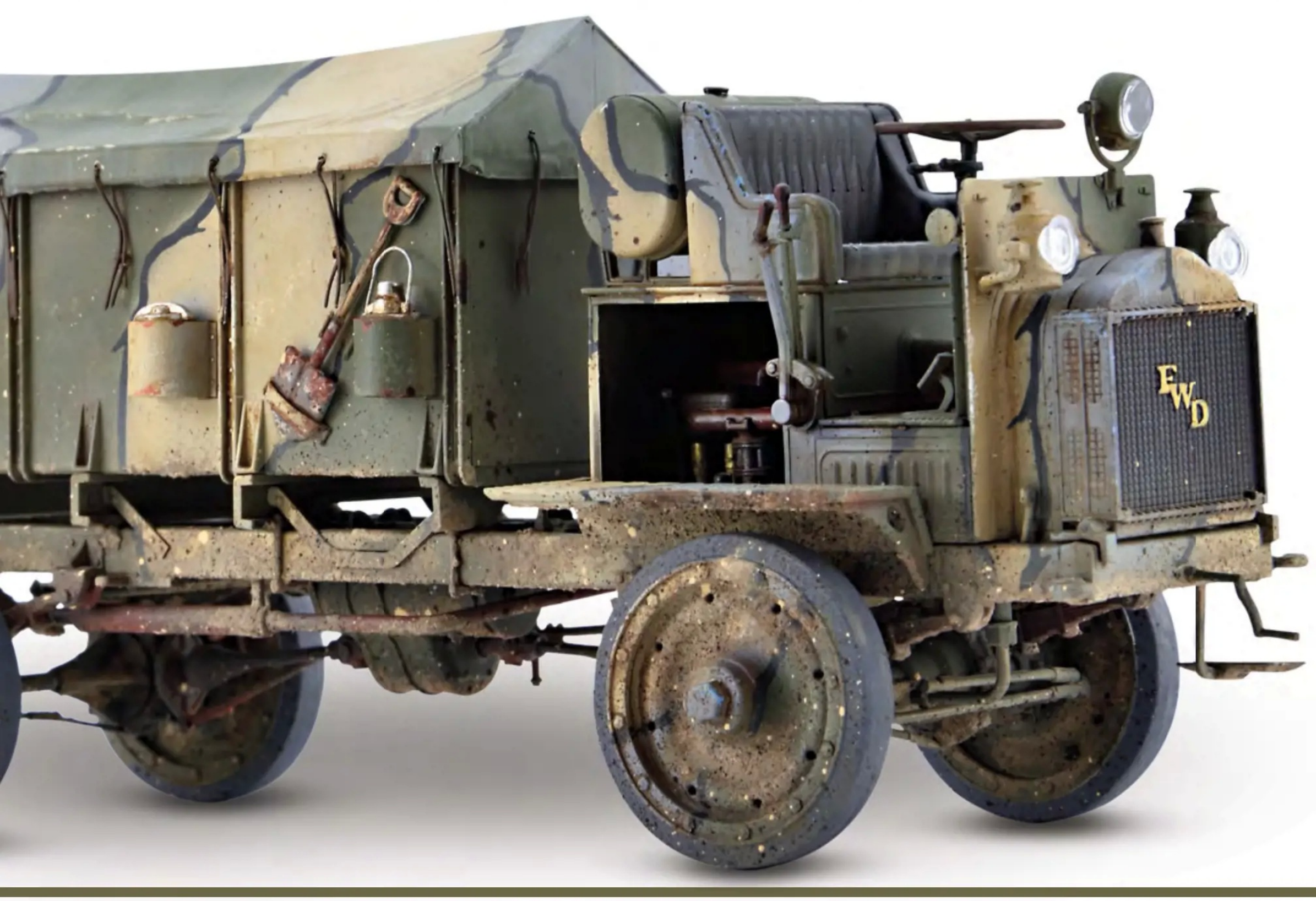
▲ The sub-assemblies associated with the chassis. All of them fitted together and aligned well, despite the many complex parts.

Next came the gear and transfer box, which was built into a cylindrical container, shaped from several curved parts. This sub-assembly was also only dry-fitted to the chassis, before being put to one side ahead of painting. With this, most of the vehicle’s frame was completed and it was time to approach the upper structures.

Moving up

The ammunition container featured crisp surface detail. Its construction and that of the associated tarpaulin was quick and easy. You could leave them as is, but to me the canvas looked a tad smooth for coarse fabric. For a more textured look, a piece of broad aluminium tape, of the kind used when insulating a pipe, was draped over the plastic part. This had the effect of adding folds and creases, along with providing a scale tarpaulin edge. The canvas cover also needed strings for fastening it over the load bed. To accommodate this, holes were drilled in the canvas with a 0.5mm bit, as well as the receiving eyelets on the container. This was then ‘rigged’ with 0.4mm metal wire from the scrap box. With the tools attached, construction of the load bed was finished.

The driver’s compartment and engine cover were tackled next, where several flat parts were detailed, aligned and assembled. Again, there were no obvious issues, although dry-fitting



“I had already painted the chassis green before any of the upper structure was added”

Cooling louvres on the engine side panels were well represented. They also proved handy when aligning the driving compartment.

The main parts of the cab assembled, minus the radiator.

To display the engine, part of one side cover was removed and a mounting frame fashioned from plastic card.

The driver’s elaborate sofa-like seat wouldn’t look out of place in a pub lounge. Note the radiator fan in situ.

the parts with the chassis and the radiator was carried out continuously. A potential issue with the radiator pipe misaligning with the radiator was spotted and fixed by drilling a hole in the radiator to receive the pipe.

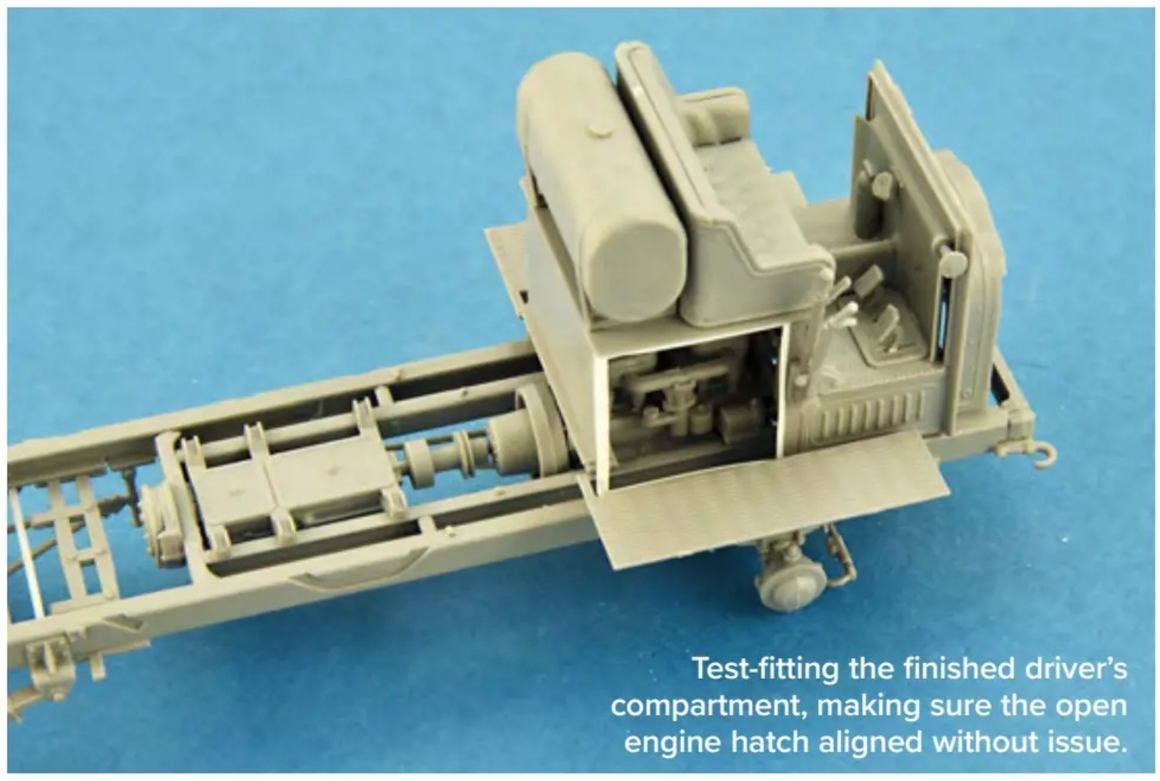
The instructions hinted that part of the engine covers could be cut to display the powerplant. However, instead of drilling and cutting the panel, I separated it and added a scratch-built plastic card 'frame' as this seemed an easier route to follow. The driver's sofa-style seat was then assembled, along with the steering column. With these parts, construction was finalised and the model could be primed with Mr. Finishing Surfacer 1500 Gray to unify the surface and check for any blemishes or seam issues.

Interesting camouflage

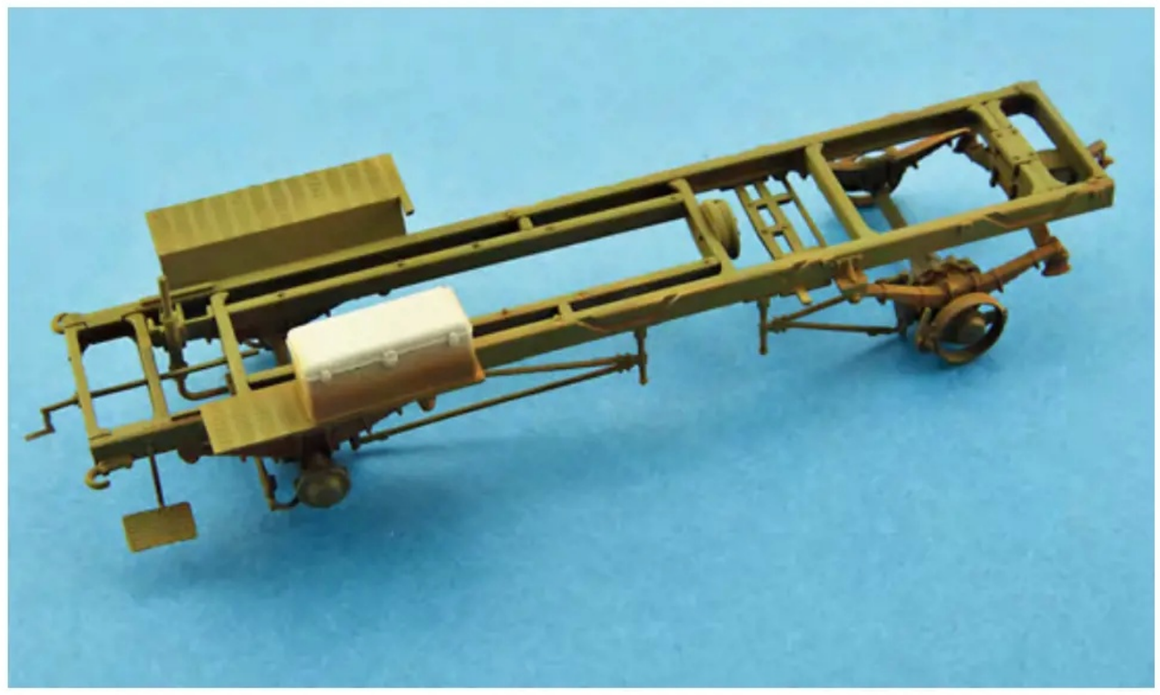
The standard FWD was finished in a dark olive/service green, which was applied at the factory. However, the artwork on the cover depicted an interestingly camouflaged vehicle, painted in one of the experimental schemes developed by artists and war departments at that time. The look was deemed typical for World War One and seemed too good to ignore, so this was the chosen scheme.

To facilitate access, I had already painted the chassis green before any of the upper structure was added. For the same purpose, the container and roadwheels were kept separate, although they were checked visually to ensure the patterns aligned properly. The first colour was the pale yellow-beige, blended from Tamiya XF-60 Dark Yellow and XF-55 Deck Tan. The mix was applied by airbrushing freehand, using a 0.25mm needle at low pressure. It was

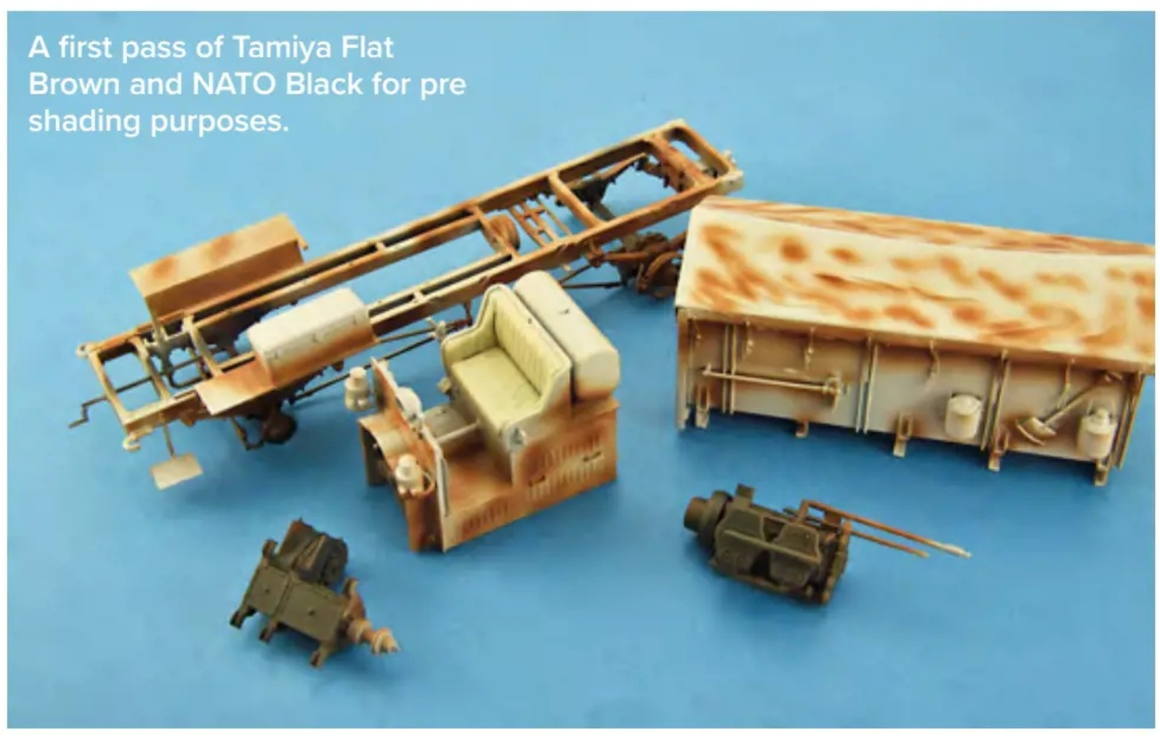
▲ The tarpaulin received a lighter coat of Tamiya Deck Tan, in an attempt to differentiate its underlying texture.



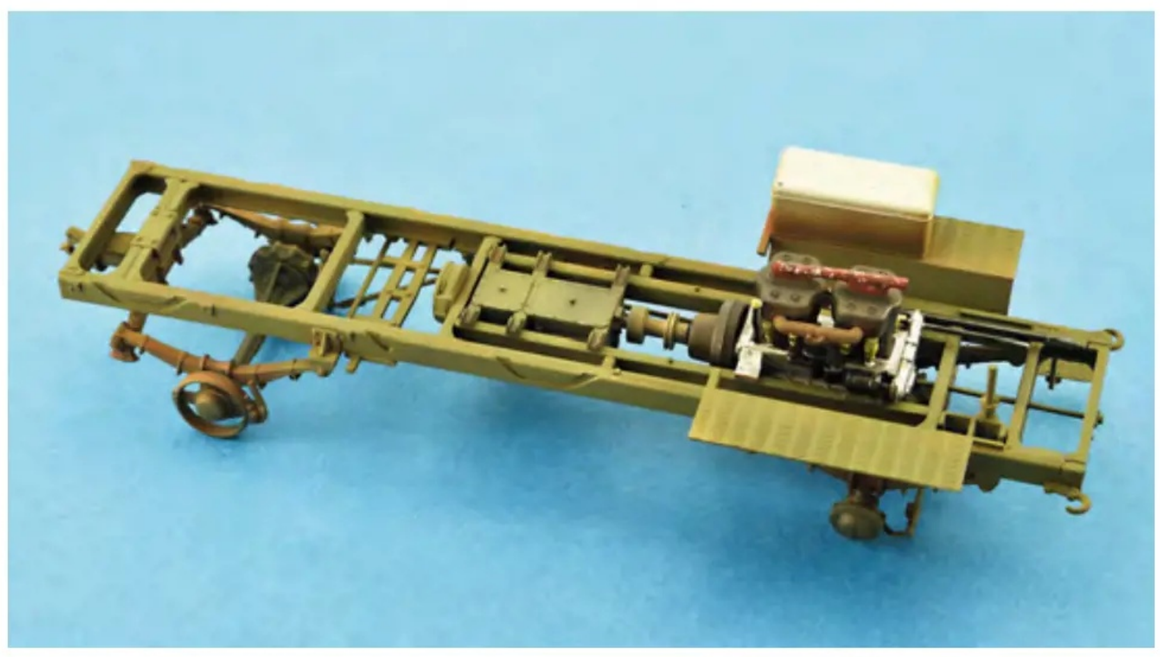
Test-fitting the finished driver's compartment, making sure the open engine hatch aligned without issue.



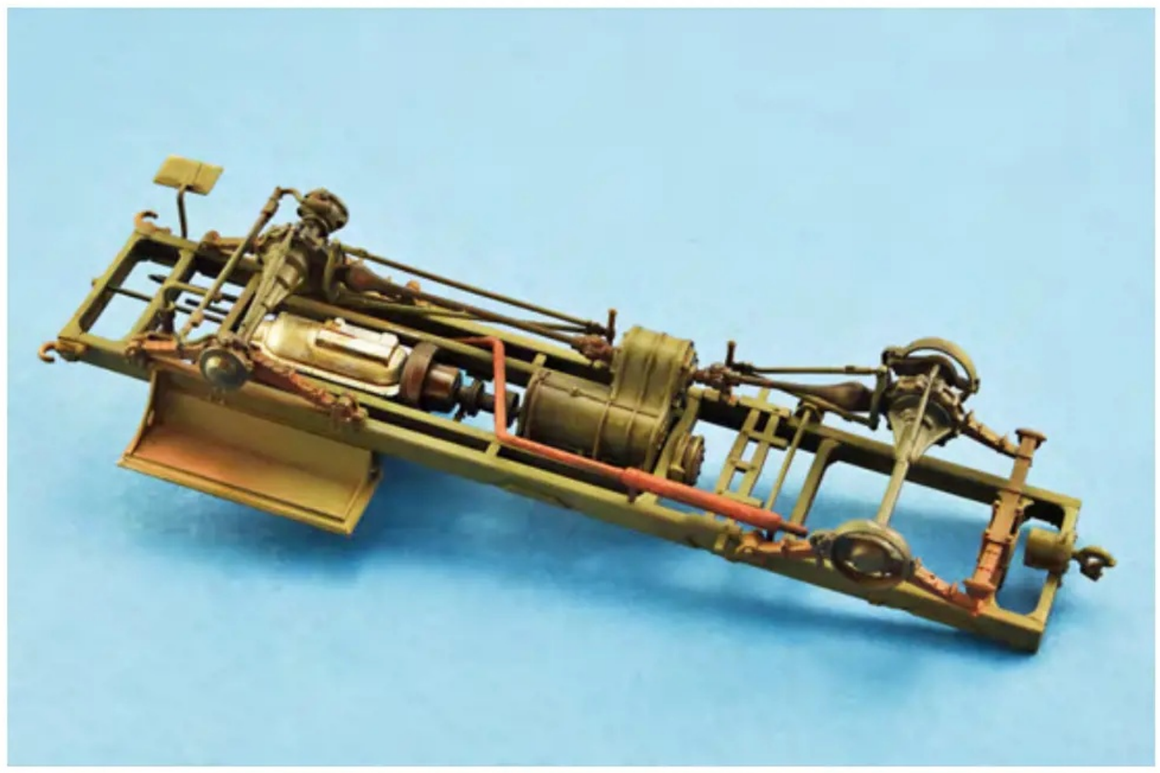
▲ The chassis was sprayed with the main green hue. This wasn't applied too tidily, as weathering and detail painting would cover most of it.



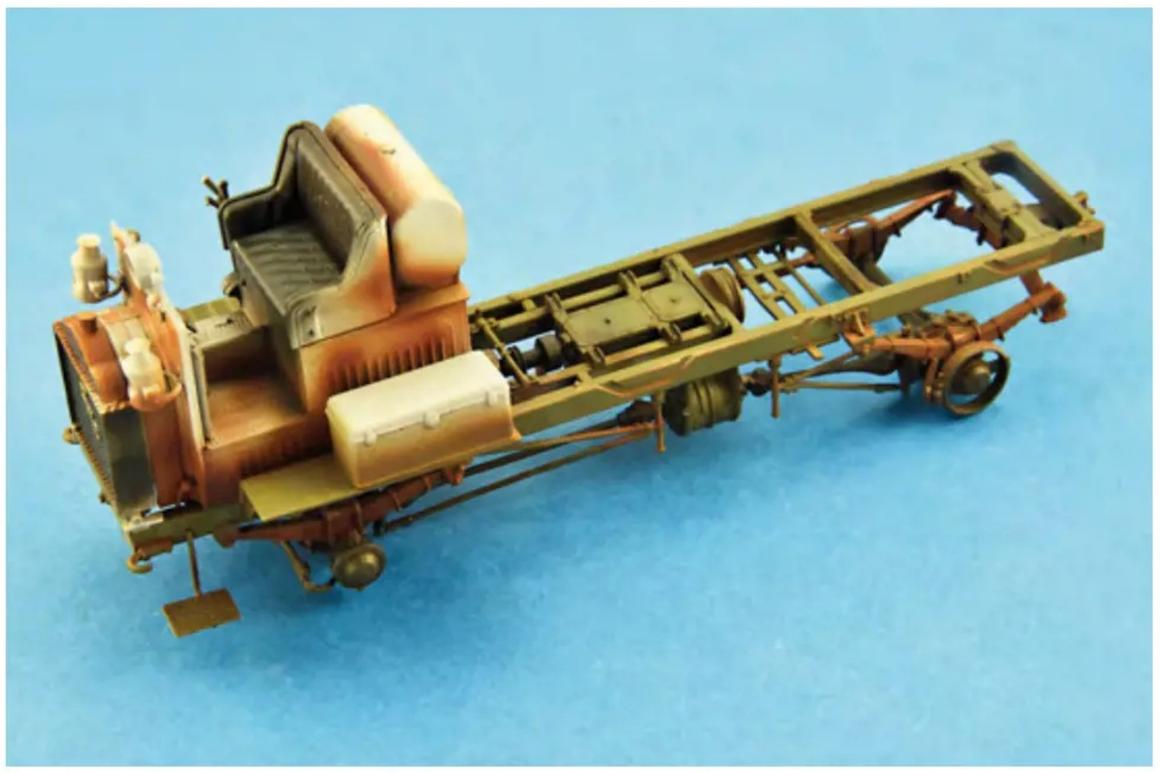
A first pass of Tamiya Flat Brown and NATO Black for pre shading purposes.



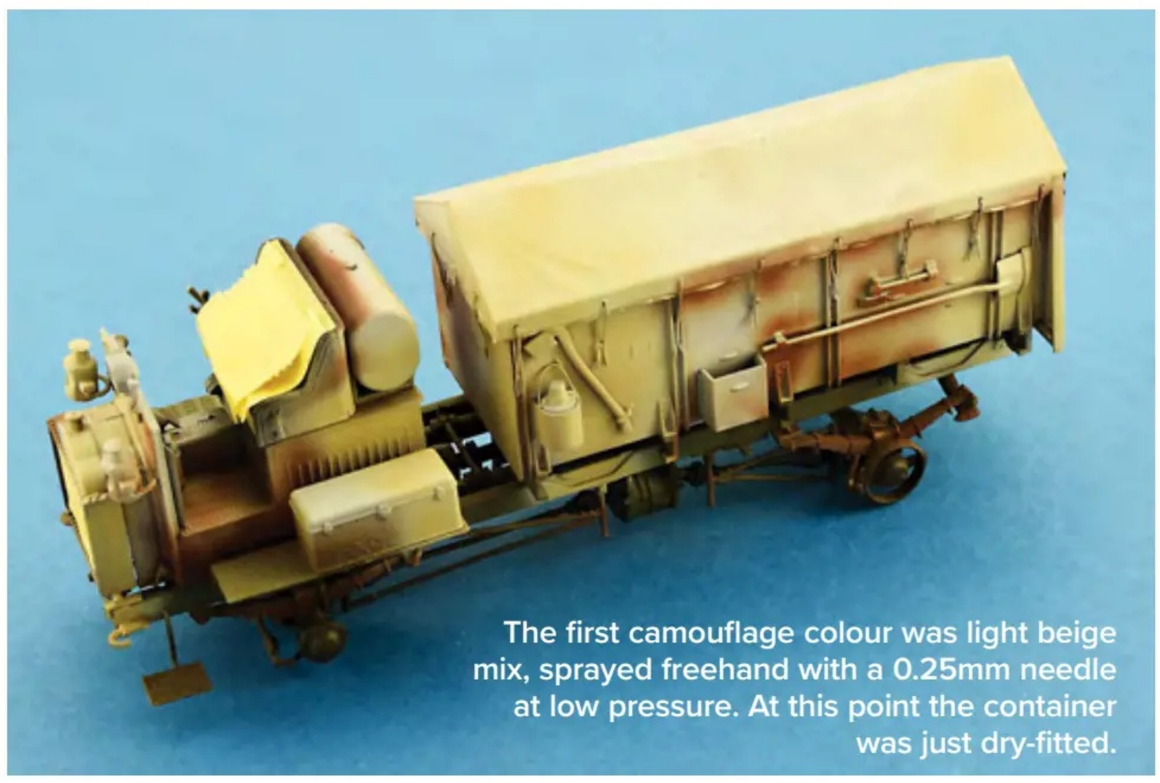
▲ Installing the painted engine and gearbox in the chassis. All looked tidy before any weathering was applied.

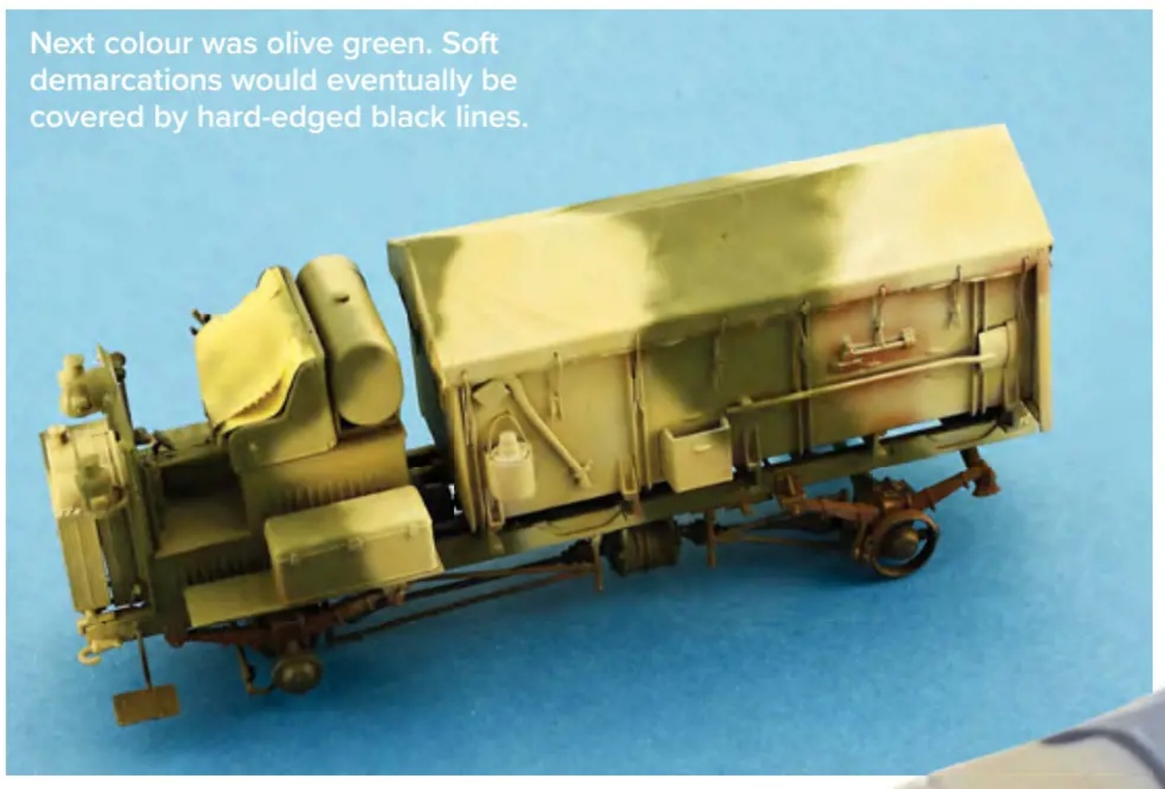


▲ Adding initial pin-washes using Winsor & Newton oils – and starting to texture the rust on the exhaust and suspension – enlivened the chassis.



▲ The driver's compartment and radiator were added in anticipation of painting the camouflage.





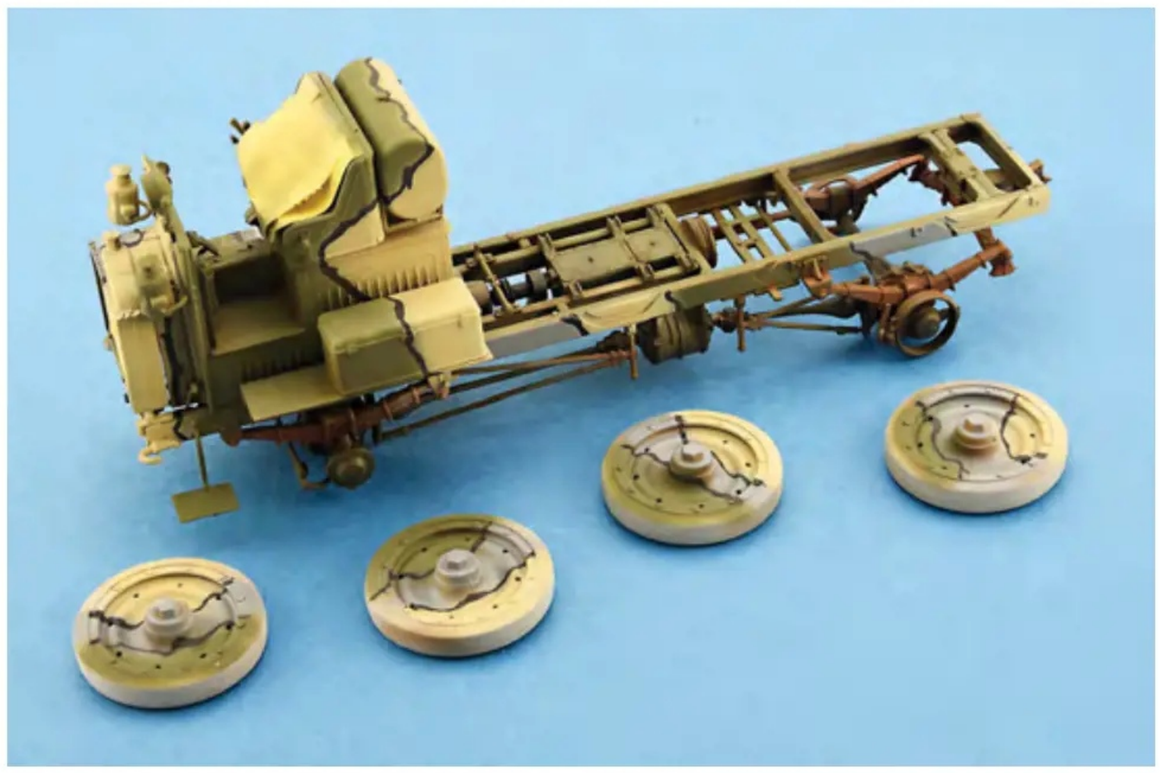
▲ Medium grey was the final camouflage colour. Note that the roadwheels received the same colours.

not essential to achieve sharp borders between the colours as they would subseqently be separated by a hard-edged black line. The next colour was the green, which was probably the original factory finish. This was sprayed next to the beige areas, using Tamiya XF-81 RAF Dark Green 2. The third and final hue was the grey, in the form of Tamiya XF-53 Neutral Grey. The result looked promising, even though the overall impression was slightly 'fuzzy' at this stage.

Using a sharply pointed Winsor & Newton size 1 sable brush, and a steady hand, the black border lines were replicated with an off-black mix of Vallejo acrylics. As noted in the few available references the original camouflage borders were not uniform in thickness and displayed various 'hooks' and bends, which made them well suited for flowing brush work. The camouflage was transformed once the borders were in place. As the tarpaulin had previously been treated to chipping fluid, this was now brought to life with a stiff brush and tap water. The result made the texture of the canvas stand out markedly from the rest of the vehicle. The next step was to paint the details and equipment – including the tools – executed during the weathering stage, using oils and acrylics.

Lots of mud

The first step of weathering was applying a pin-wash over rivets and joins to build volume and definition. This was achieved via



▲ The final camouflage stage was painting of the black outlines, with a fine brush and Vallejo acrylics.

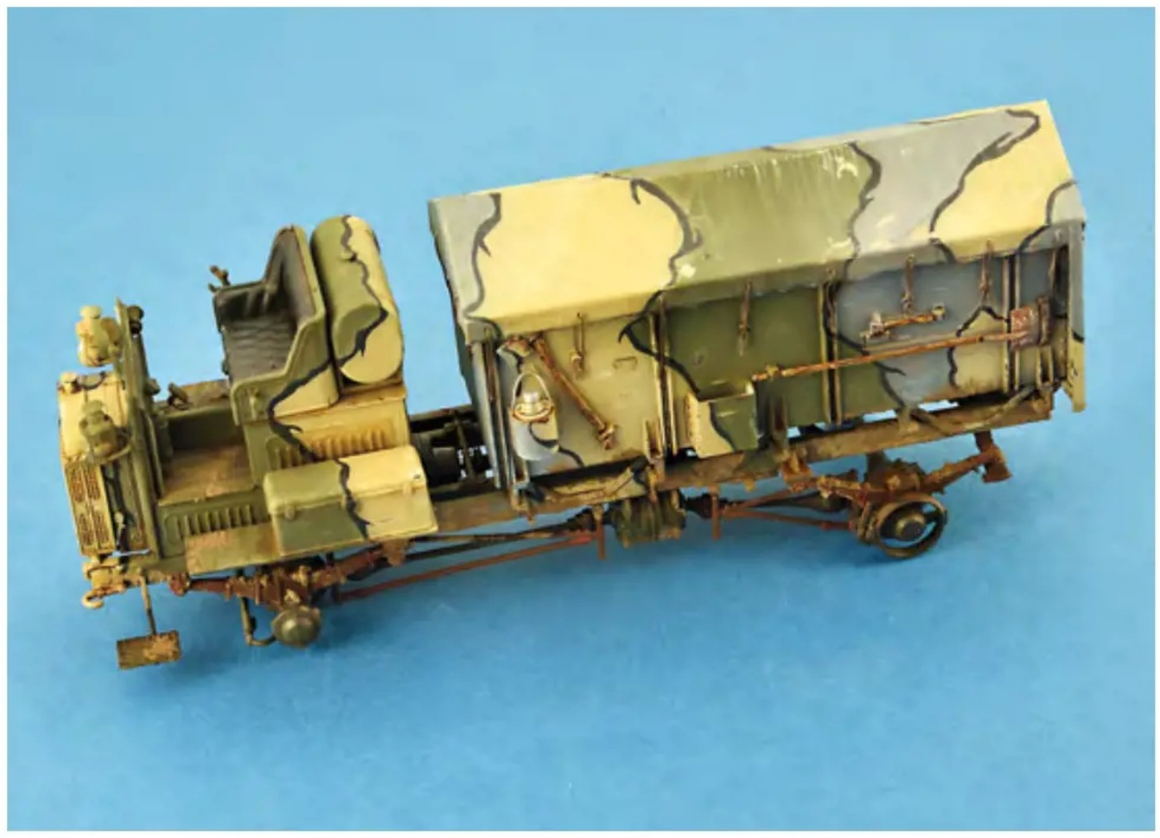
▲ The finished – and very typical World War One – camouflage still looking very clean and tidy before any weathering. The first stages of weathering involved chipping the tarpaulin paint and adding mud, plus dark pin-washes.

“As ICM kits go, this was a typical release where much emphasis was on the construction of detailed sub-assemblies”

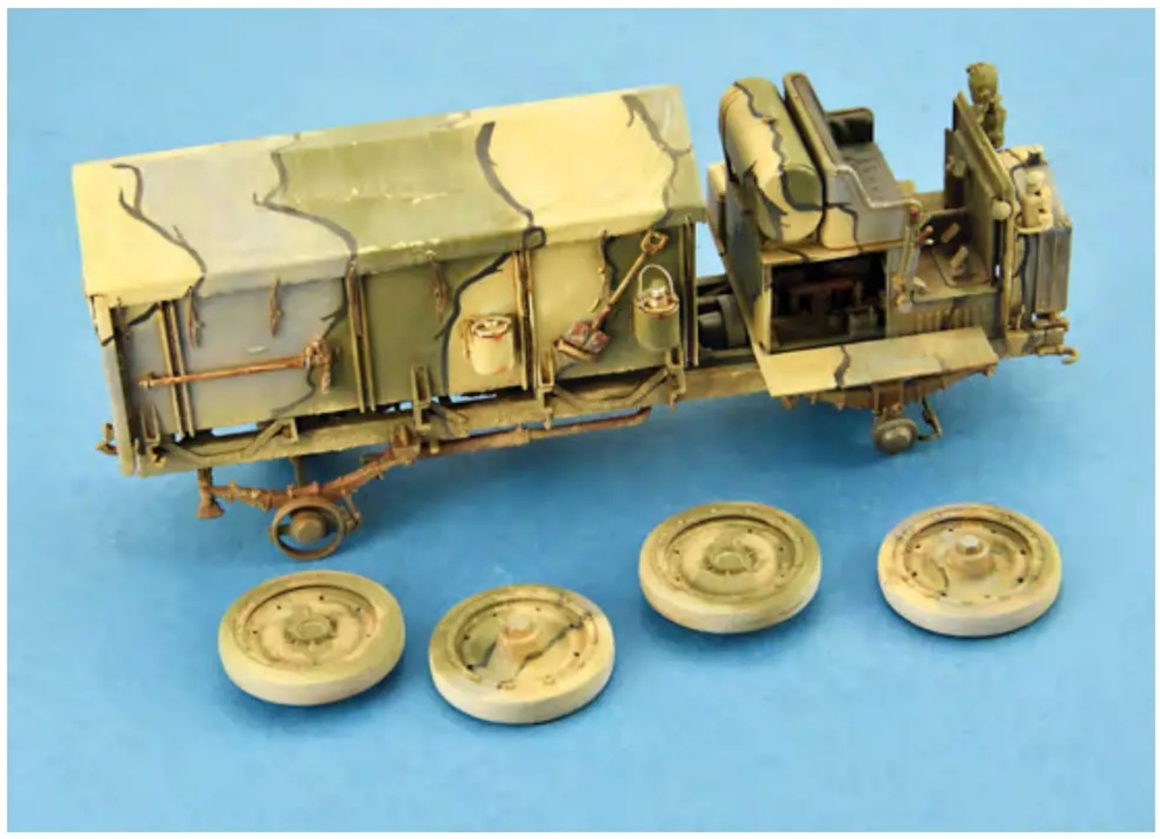
a mix of Winsor & Newton brown and black oil colours, which was then diluted to the desired consistency with white spirit.

It was now time for the second step, applying mud on the vehicle’s lower reaches. For this, plaster powder and AK 017 Earth Effects were mixed and applied with a stiff brush. Household plaster gave the enamel the volume and texture needed for mud in this scale. The first pass with the mix was applied in the most logical places, which left a somewhat patchy appearance. This was okay, as it was just the first step, which served as the foundation for the following stages. A second pass with the mud mix, building further volume, was followed by airbrushing with a light blend of Revell 85 Brown and 89 Beige. This had the

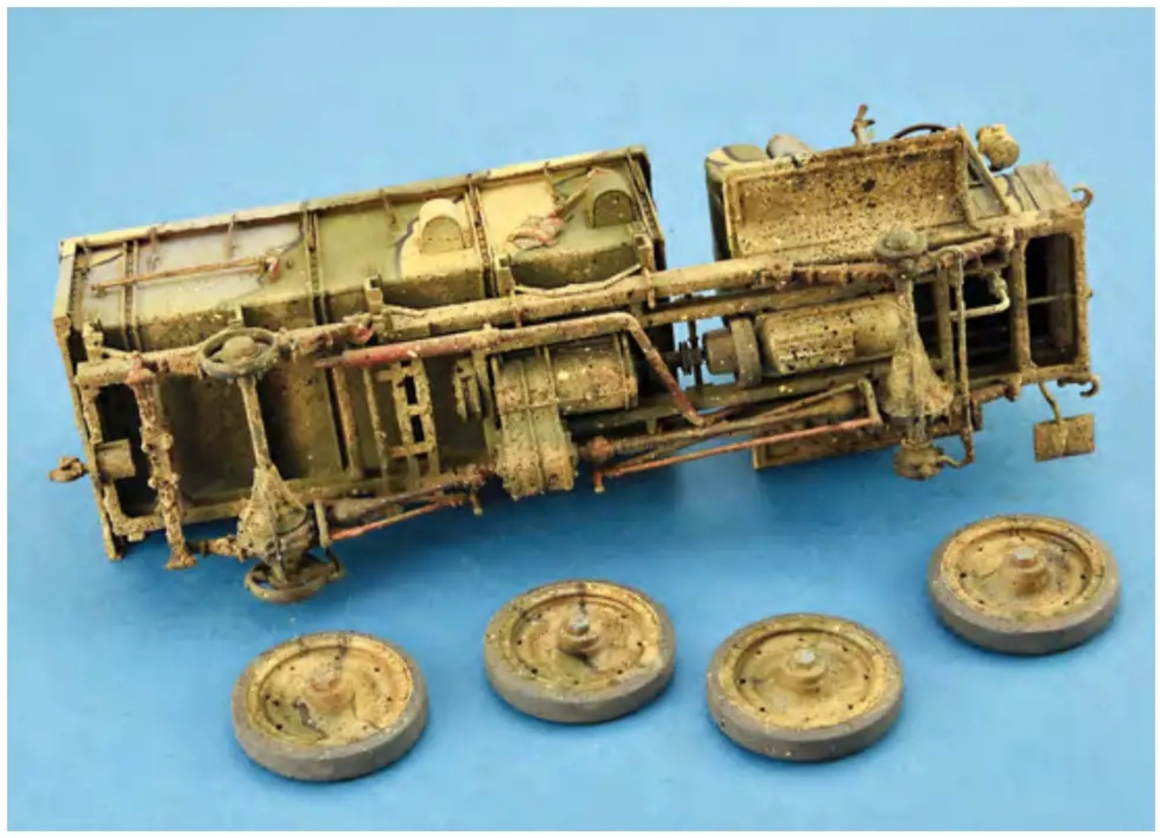
“Part of the engine covers could be cut to display the powerplant”



▲ The next stage was chipping by painting lighter colours, detail brushwork and further pin-washes to highlight raised features.



▲ A light coat of an enamel mix was sprayed to simulate dust, blending the mud and harmonising the appearance.



▲ The final step was adding a sporadic dark wash and flicking light and dark splatters with a stiff brush.

effect of unifying the mud and evening out the patchiness. It was important not to airbrush the dust all over the vehicle, to maintain contrast. In certain places, such as on the tarpaulin, the dust layer was streaked and stippled with a brush moistened in white spirit. This can be done within 30 minutes of airbrushing, before the enamel hardens. This was followed by another light pass over selected places with the enamel mix and the dust effect, slowly building the accumulation of mud and dirt.

The same amalgam of Revell enamels, but this time with plaster added, was then flicked with a stiff brush to create mud splatters, concentrating around the lower body and rear wheelhouse. A similar mix, but this time using Winsor & Newton’s 676 Van Dyke Brown, resulted in darker splatters. This left a convincing texture and, in a final move, a wash of darker oils was worked into nooks and crannies. Once the weathering had dried, the wheels could be added and the build completed.

Thoughtful release

ICM has made a habit of surprising the modelling community with lesser-known subjects based on more mainstream initial products. This makes good sense as an existing tooling can be utilised, and the modeller gets to build something that’s a little more unusual. The World War One US ammunition truck was a subject of which I had just vague knowledge, but the build was certainly enjoyable and (mostly) straightforward. However, ICM’s kit design does present challenges, as the company favours busy, multi-part sub-assemblies.

Though the fit was good, I needed to ensure everything was aligned properly, so dry-fitting is recommended throughout. The high level of detail also brought a certain fragility to the process, making the chassis hard to handle once all parts were added. This means the kit is better suited to someone with several intermediate builds under their belt. The typical World War One camouflage was satisfying to replicate, while weathering was open to heavy wear and plenty of dirt. I’m now hoping for an ICM release of the British export variant used by the War Department, which differs in various ways.

AMW

MATERIALS AT A GLANCE

AK Interactive (ak-interactive.com)
AK 017 Earth Effects
AK 040 Light Dust
AK 088 Worn Effects Acrylic Fluid

Mr. Hobby (www.albionhobbies.com)
Mr. Finishing Surfacer 1500 Gray

Revell Enamels (www.revell.co.uk)
85 Brown
89 Beige

Tamiya (www.hobbyco.net)
XF-1 Black
XF-2 White
XF-10 Flat Brown
XF-51 Khaki Drab
XF-52 Flat Earth
XF-53 Neutral Grey
XF-55 Deck Tan
XF-60 Dark Yellow
XF-68 NATO Brown
XF-69 NATO Black
XF-81 RAF Dark Green 2
X-22 Clear Gloss

Vallejo (www.creativemodels.co.uk)
70.804 Beige Red
70.819 Iraqi Sand
70.850 Medium Olive
70.859 Black Red
70.866 Grey Green
70.871 Leather Brown
70.875 Beige Brown
70.876 Brown Sand
70.877 US Olive Drab
70.950 Black
70.986 Deck Tan
77.701 Aluminium
77.703 Dark Aluminium
77.725 Gold

Winsor & Newton (https://uk.winsornewton.com)
076 Burnt Umber
331 Ivory black
676 Van Dyke Brown
678 Venetian Red

Aluminium tape for tarpaulin

EXCLUSIVE

AIRFIX Model World

SUPPLEMENT

Messerschmitt Bf 109G-5/G-6

IN FOCUS
Germany's Gustav in detail

EXCLUSIVE
Building Airfix's new-tool 1/24 Bf 109G-6

'White 2', a Bf 109G-6 of 7./JG 27 escorting a VIP transport Heinkel He 111. This aircraft has many features of the comparatively early-production Bf 109G-6 layout, with original vertical stabiliser and canopy, and short tailwheel leg. Malcolm V Lowe Collection

Luftwaffe Legend

The Bf 109G-6 and its related G-5 variant was a highly important Luftwaffe fighter in the later days of World War Two. **Malcolm V Lowe** tells the story of this significant line of German warplanes

One of the best-known and most iconic warplanes of World War Two was the Messerschmitt Bf 109, a versatile fighter, fighter-bomber and reconnaissance platform. The type first flew during 1935 and was in service with Nazi Germany's Luftwaffe from 1937 until the end of the war in May 1945. It was one of the few combat types that was in service at the start of the conflict and remained in frontline use throughout the war.

Among the main operational versions of the Bf 109 was the Bf 109G or 'Gustav' series. This was the most widely produced model of the Bf 109, and was a direct follow-on from the Bf 109F. Deliveries of the first operational version of the Gustav line, the Bf

109G-1, began in mid-1942.

Chief among the various Bf 109G sub-types were the G-5 pressurised fighter and the related, but non-pressurised, G-6. Of great importance to the Luftwaffe in the later war years, the Bf 109G-6 was manufactured by a number of factories in a variety of formats, in addition to the type being suitable for carrying several production line and 'in the field' modifications. The 'G-6' was the most numerous of all the Bf 109 models, with more than 12,000 being built.

Overall, the Bf 109G series was the third main production type powered by Daimler-Benz engines, with the company's DB 601 installed in the Bf 109E and Bf 109F. For the 'Gustav', though, the newer and more powerful DB 605 was the engine of choice. Initially the DB 605A, capable of producing 1,475hp for take-off, was fitted (German horsepower is measured slightly differently to its British equivalent).

The Bf 109G-6 was closely related to the G-5, which was produced in parallel, the significant difference between the two being that cockpit pressurisation was included in the latter, allowing it to fly higher. However, it was crude compared to that installed in modern-day aircraft and the type was built in very small numbers; just 475 examples have been positively identified. All Bf 109G-5s were built by Erla Maschinenwerk GmbH at Leipzig in eastern Germany, this company being a major subcontractor for Bf 109 airframe construction.

Several manufacturers

Initially, the Bf 109G-6 was made in two distinct versions: the 'straight' Bf 109G-6 and the Bf 109G-6 trop. The latter was fitted with a special filter

▲ **Gerhard Barkhorn's famous 'Double Chevron' numbered '5', which has been a controversial aircraft among historians. This aircraft exhibited outwardly visible traits of both the G-5 and G-6, with the former's lack of air intake fairing immediately beneath the windscreen, but with no other obvious G-5 features. All G-5 airframes were built by Erla at Leipzig on the same production line as a series of G-6 fighters.** JB Collection

▲ **One of several Bf 109G fighters named 'Christl' flown by the second-highest scoring fighter pilot of all time, Gerhard Barkhorn. This is Erla-built Werk Nummer 15909, described by some writers as a pressurised Bf 109G-5 due to its lack of fresh air inlet beneath the windscreen, but by others as a non-pressurised G-6, as there are no visible silica gel pellets in the cockpit canopy.** JB Collection

over its supercharger air intake on the port side of the engine cowling. This filter stopped fine sand and dust from entering the supercharger and was specifically for use in North Africa; although it was also helpful for operations during the dry and dusty summers in parts of the Soviet Union.

However, there eventually existed several distinct sub-types during the lengthy G-6 production run, with later aircraft being markedly different to those at the start of the war. Additional to Messerschmitt's own production of the Bf 109G-6 at Regensburg (MTT) in Bavaria, the type was also built by several other manufacturers/subcontractors including Wiener Neustädter Flugzeugwerke (WNF) in Austria, as well as Erla at Leipzig, which built the Bf 109G-6 on the same production line as the G-5 and consequently mixed the werk nummer (works' serial number) of the two types. Germany's ally, Hungary, also built the Bf 109G-6 in comparatively small numbers. Supplying components to these final assembly lines were myriad smaller companies throughout Germany and German-occupied countries. Manufacture of the G-6 took place roughly between February 1943 and June 1944, although one production batch appears to have existed as late as November 1944.

▲ **A Bf 109G-6 trop, showing the long 'tropical' dust and sand filter fitted to the supercharger air intake on the port cowling. Several different designs of long-range fuel tank were carried beneath the fuselage by Bf 109s... oil leaks onto the tank from the engine were a common trait, regardless of the type .** Malcolm V Lowe Collection

Improved firepower

The Bf 109G-5 and G-6 introduced an important up-gunning of the type. In previous versions, including earlier 'Gustavs', the upper forward fuselage armament comprised two 7.92mm MG 17 machine guns. For the Bf 109G-5 and G-6 these were replaced by two 13mm MG 131 machine guns. The whole installation was wider than the existing fuselage profile, resulting in a prominent bulge being introduced on each side, partly on the engine cowling panels and partly on the forward fuselage sides. This received the German nickname 'Beule' for bump or bulge. The centrally mounted 20mm MG 151/20 cannon firing through the propeller hub was retained.

Although this new weapons installation increased the Bf 109G-6's firepower considerably, the weight gain that had been prevalent in the whole Bf 109 series from the Bf 109E onwards particularly affected the Bf 109G-5 and G-6, with an attendant degrading of overall performance.

Additional equipment

Rüstsatz (plural Rüstsätze; abbreviation 'R') were field modification kits produced for a variety of Luftwaffe combat aircraft during World War Two. They were provided in kit form, usually direct from the type's manufacturer, and allowed for 'in the field' alterations. Rüstsatz kits could therefore be fitted at airfield maintenance level. Markedly different were Umrüst-Bausatz kits (plural Umrüst-Bausätze; abbreviated 'U'), which were typically fitted in the factory. However, this was not a hard and fast rule. During production runs, various Rüstsätze kits were often fitted by factories to meet specific operational demands. In general, though, Umrüst-Bausätze kits were more complex and needed the expertise and tools available on the production line to fit them.

Probably the best known of the Rüstsätze was a fairing (often called a 'gondola') beneath each wing, containing a 20mm MG151/20 cannon. This installation is usually referred to as a Rüstsatz 6 or R6 field modification and is frequently written for brevity in published sources as Bf 109G-6/R6. However, some writers claim this alteration did not have an official name and did not change the aircraft's actual designation, while others call this modification R5 rather than R6. The G-6s so equipped were sometimes nicknamed 'gunboats'.

From the summer of 1943, Bf 109G-6s manufactured by WNF were equipped with a centrally-mounted 30mm MK 108 cannon that fired through the propeller hub, replacing the established 20mm MG 151/20 cannon. These aircraft received the designation Bf 109G-6/U4.

A new stand-off, anti-bomber weapon was introduced for use by the Bf 109G-6. This was the 21cm Werfer-Granate 21

Following the Italian armistice of September 1943, northern Italy fought on the German side and its air force, the Aeronautica Nazionale Repubblicana (ANR) operated the Bf 109G. This Bf 109G-6, 'White 9' of the ANR's II Gruppo Caccia was flown by Tenente (Lt) Ennio Bramato. (Malcolm V Lowe Collection)

▲ **Outwardly there was little to distinguish between a late-production Bf 109G-6 and the related mark that followed it, the Bf 109G-14. VD358 was an Erla-built airframe, Werk Nummer 413598, that was captured in the Netherlands and later served during 1945 with the Enemy Aircraft Flight of the Central Fighter Establishment at RAF Tangmere in Sussex. It has variously been described as a late G-6 or early G-14.** Malcolm V Lowe Collection

▲ **Fitted with an R6 'gondola' beneath each wing containing a 20mm MG 151/20 cannon, Bf 109G-6 'White 8' was assigned to 1./JG 27 in early 1944 at Fels am Wagram in Austria.** Malcolm V Lowe Collection

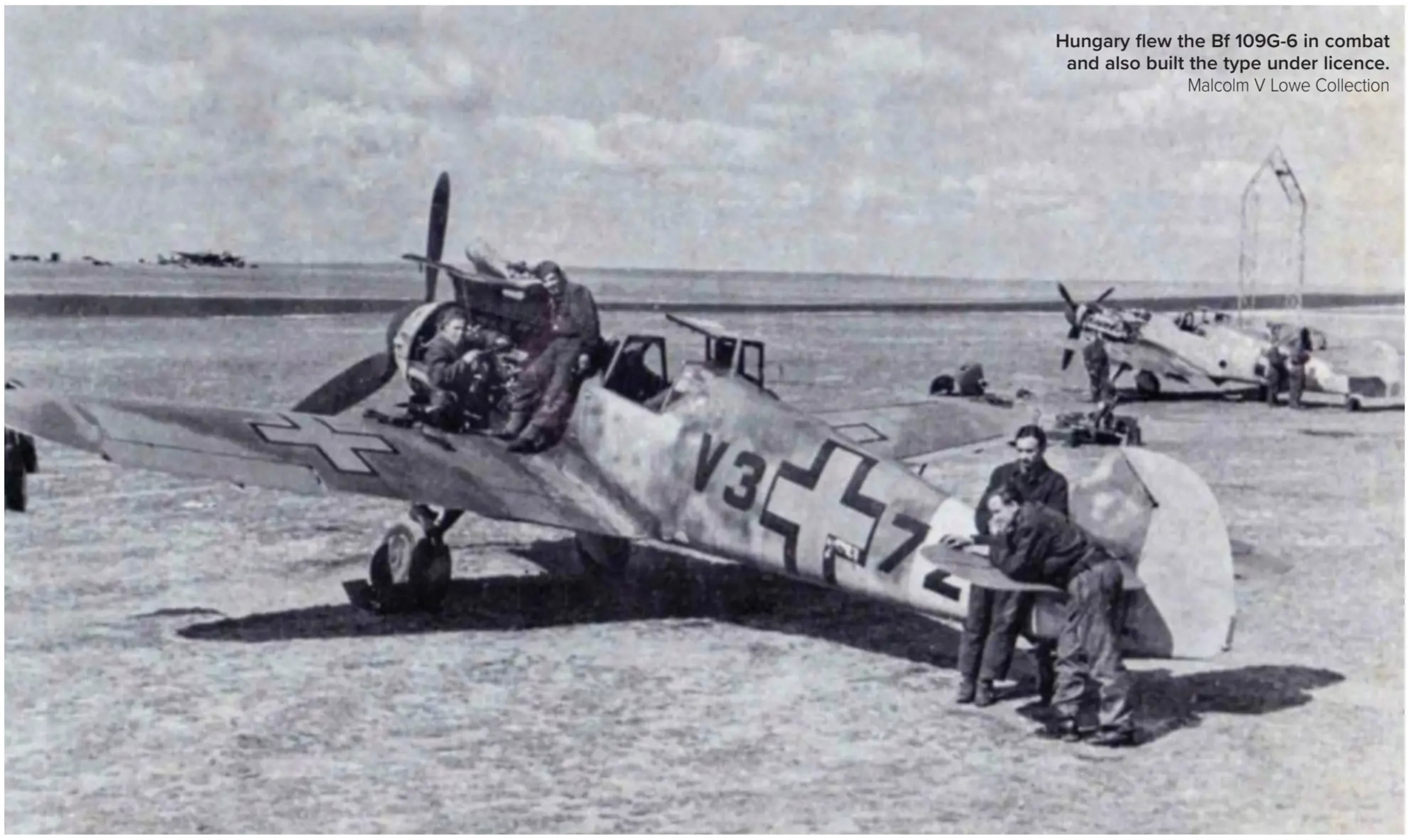
(WGr 21), comprising a single large unguided rocket projectile, one of which was mounted in a prominent external tube beneath each wing. The hefty rockets had a 90lb warhead. Originally intended to be an air-to-ground weapon, and used as such on D-Day by several Luftwaffe fighter units, they were employed as stand-off weapons against US heavy bomber formations. They could be fired from a distance of 3,900ft, outside the effective range of the bombers' defensive guns. In an emergency, the tubes could be jettisoned using an explosive charge.

Other important Rüstsatz add-ons included the provision for a 300-litre drop tank beneath the fuselage (R3) to alleviate the comparatively short range and endurance of the Bf 109 in all its various operational models. The R1 designation referred to a limited-numbers fighter-bomber conversion with an ETC 500 bomb rack beneath the fuselage. The abbreviation R2was rarely used to describe camera-equipped fighters produced by WNF.

Significant alterations

During the long production run of the Bf 109G-6, a number of important changes were made to the type's design and equipment. One of these was the introduction of a 'tall tail', which replaced the Bf 109's established metal vertical tailplane, fabric-covered metal-framed rudder and angled rudder hinge line with a completely different unit made of wood. This new wooden tailplane featured a straight vertical rudder hinge line and was heavier than the original tail of the earlier Bf 109G models and the preceding Bf 109E and F, thus adding to the G-6's mounting weight issues. It was made from wood due to Nazi Germany having to cut its reliance on increasingly scarce metal later in the war. The change took place gradually during 1944, but many earlier G-6s were retrofitted with the wooden tail when undergoing major work at repair and maintenance facilities.

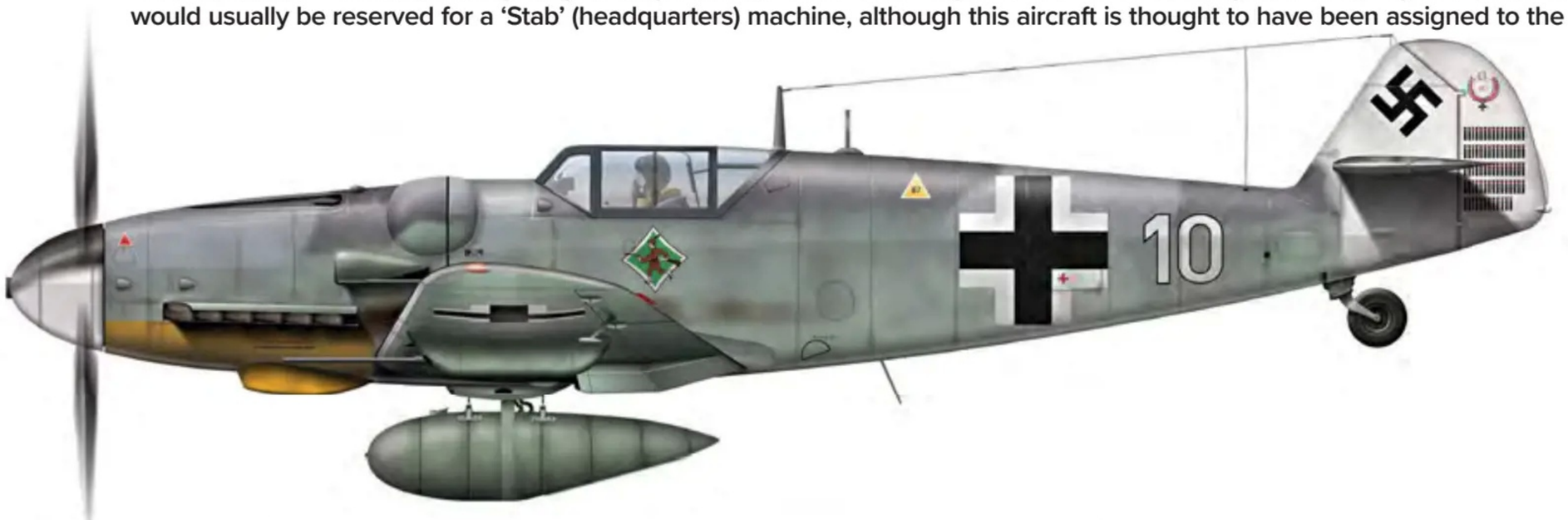
The larger 'tall tail' was introduced in the 163 000+ werk nummer production batch, and



Hungary flew the Bf 109G-6 in combat and also built the type under licence. Malcolm V Lowe Collection

Bf 109G-6/R6/trop, WNr 16470 ‘White 9’ flown by Oberleutnant Emil Clade, Staffelkapitän, 7./JG 27, Kalamaki, Greece, January 1944. MTT-built aircraft with standard RLM 74/75 upper surfaces with fuselage mottle of these shades, RLM 76 lower surfaces (these shades did not have official RLM names). Patches of greenish-grey RLM 02 Grau on fuselage sides. Dark green or black-green and white spinner, white fuselage band and vertical tail surfaces.

Bf 109G-6/AS or G-14/AS, ‘Green 5’, EJG 2, Hagenow, Germany, December 1944. Overall black. Black/white spinner. Several Messerschmitts were used as night-fighters by instructors of the training unit EJG 2, hence the green colouring of the number ‘5’ which would usually be reserved for a ‘Stab’ (headquarters) machine, although this aircraft is thought to have been assigned to the 2nd Staffel.



Bf 109G-6G-6/R3/R-6, ‘White 10’ flown by Oberleutnant Alfred Grislawski, Staffelkapitän, 1./JG 50, Wiesbaden-Erbenheim, Germany, September 1943. Standard RLM 74/75 upper surfaces with fuselage mottle of these shades, RLM 76 lower surfaces (these shades did not have official RLM names). Yellow lower cowling RLM 04 Gelb. Dark green or black-green and white spinner, white rear fuselage and vertical tail surfaces.

Bf 109G-6/R1, ‘Black Double Chevron’ flown by Major Erich Leie, Gruppenkommandeur, I./JG 51, Orsha (Soviet Union), late 1943/early 1944. Upper surfaces white ‘winter’ finish, RLM 76 light blue-grey lower surfaces. Yellow theatre markings RLM 04 Gelb. Bf 109G-6 fighters were sometimes pressed into service as fighter-bombers on the Eastern Front.

Bf 109G-6/R6/trop, ‘Black Double Chevron’ flown by Major Kurt Ubben, Gruppenkommandeur, III./JG 77, ‘Wander-Zirkus Ubben’ (Ubben’s Wandering – or Travelling – Circus), Foggia, Italy, May 1943. Standard RLM 74/75 upper surfaces with fuselage mottle of these shades, RLM 76 lower surfaces (these shades did not have official RLM names). Yellow lower cowling RLM 04 Gelb. White spinner, and white theatre fuselage band and wing tips.

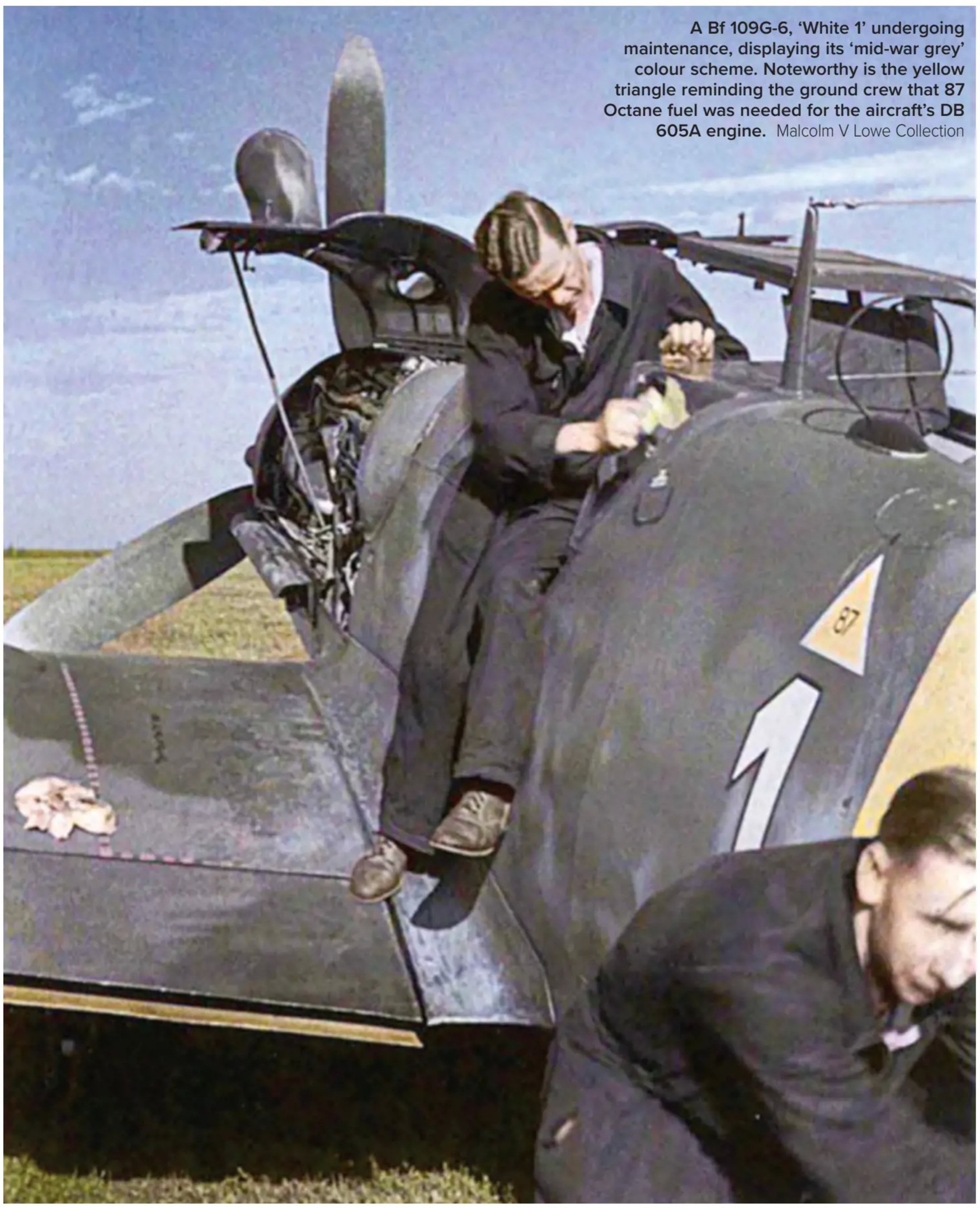
▲ **A rare colour photo of a Bf 109G-6 production line at Erla Maschinenwerk in Leipzig during the summer or autumn of 1943.** Malcolm V Lowe Collection

was an important distinguishing feature of many late-war Bf 109s of the G-6 and later versions.

For the Gustav's pilot, several major alterations to the cockpit cover took place during the Bf 109G's production run. On earlier Bf 109s, rear vision was impaired by the pilot's head armour, which was fixed inside the opening cockpit canopy and was a solid sheet of metal. From the late summer of 1943, it was gradually replaced by a different type of armour, which was partly glazed. This was the so-called 'Galland-Panzer' ('Galland Armour'), named after the famed German fighter pilot Adolf Galland. Even more radical was the introduction of a completely new cockpit canopy from late 1943-early 1944. The new canopy replaced not just the heavily framed opening part of the cockpit cover, but also the fixed rear section found on all previous Bf 109s. The new unit is often referred to as a 'Galland Hood'. In reality it was called the 'Erla Haube' and there appear to have been several different types of this curved transparent structure. The armoured plate behind the pilot's head inside this new unit was usually of the Galland Panzer type, but the earlier armour was sometimes fitted instead. The new canopy hinged on the starboard edge of the cockpit opening, like the earlier heavily framed type.

The change of canopy also led to a related alteration to the fuselage radio mast associated with the FuG 16Z radio equipment of the G-6. On some aircraft this mast was relocated to the fuselage spine, while others were at the rear end of the canopy's frame. Occasionally there was no mast at all, the aerial wire instead attaching directly to the fuselage spine. In the same part of the airframe, a prominent direction-finding (DF) loop was fitted to the spine for the Peilrufanlage radio

▲ **The highest-scoring fighter pilot of all time is Erich Hartmann, seen here with a Bf 109G. Most historians credit him with 352 victories.**
Malcolm V Lowe Collection



A Bf 109G-6, 'White 1' undergoing maintenance, displaying its 'mid-war grey' colour scheme. Noteworthy is the yellow triangle reminding the ground crew that 87 Octane fuel was needed for the aircraft's DB 605A engine. Malcolm V Lowe Collection

navigation aid, plus a whip aerial for FuG 25a Erstling identification friend/foe (IFF) equipment.

A comparatively small number of G-6s were fitted with additional FuG 16ZY radio equipment and flown by formation leaders to control the groups of fighters under their guidance. A 'Morane' aerial mast was fitted beneath the port wing, which led to the little-used Bf 109G-6Y designation being assigned.

Some machines were fitted with a FuG 350Z-series Naxos direction finding receiver for limited-capability night-fighting. It homed onto the radar signals emitted by RAF night-flying bombers. The aerial for this equipment was located on the aircraft's spine in a large fitting covered with a protective transparent cover. A circular indicator unit was positioned in the cockpit for the pilot.

Another important change during the Bf 109G-6 production series was the introduction of a taller non-retracting tailwheel leg. This became an important distinguishing feature of late war Messerschmitt fighters. The production batch that introduced this modification is believed to have been from 167 000 onwards, but no specific change of designation was ever documented.

▲ **A rocket-armed Bf 109G-6 trop of 12./JG 3. This unit is thought to be the first to have become operational with the underwing WGr 21 21cm air-to-air rocket system in southern Europe during August 1943.** Malcolm V Lowe Collection

A rare colour image of a Bf 109G-6 trop, 'Yellow 13' of 6./JG 51, based on Sardinia during the summer of 1943. JB via Malcolm V Lowe

Power shift

Among the most significant developments that took place during the Bf 109G-6's manufacturing period were alterations to the type's propulsion. This initially took the form of boost being made available for the DB 605A. Two types of 'add-on' power were devised, the most numerous of which was GM-1 nitrous oxide boost, the aircraft so converted being designated Bf 109G-6/U2. Also available was MW 50 methanol-water boost, for which the name Bf 109G-6/U3 was reserved. The MW 50 power boost could increase the output of the DB 605A engine to some 1,770hp using C3 96-100 octane fuel. Whichever boost additive was used, it could only be employed for a short time, but it did give the G-6 a top speed of 386mph above 22,000ft.

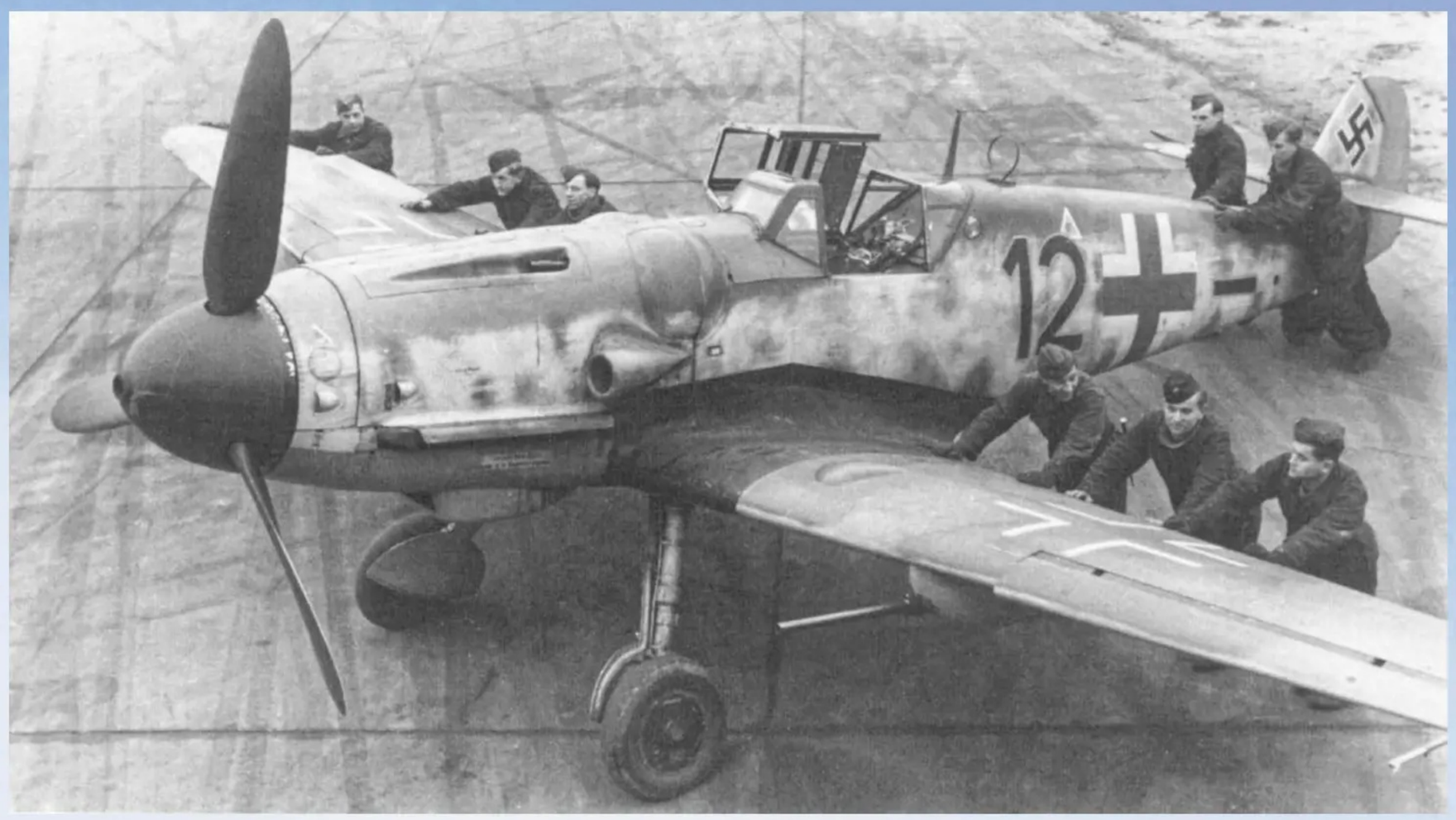
Although these 'add-ons' improved performance, of greatest importance was a special derivative of the DB 605 engined, designated DB 605AS. This was intended as a high-altitude engine to allow the Bf 109G-6 to climb to the same altitudes as USAAF

heavy bombers and engage in combat. The chief alteration to the DB 605-series engine of the Bf 109G-5 and G-6 was an enlarged and more powerful supercharger. With the DB 605AS engine installed, the designation changed to Bf 109G-6/AS. Some of these were new-build machines constructed by Messerschmitt at Regensburg from May to August 1944, but many were conversions of existing G-6 airframes.

Aircraft fitted with the AS engine were identifiable by a change to the shape of the upper forward fuselage and its sides adjacent to the rear part of the engine bay. The prominent 'Beule' blisters, which had been added for the MG 131 machine guns in the upper forward fuselage on the normal DB 605A-powered Bf 109G-5/G-6 line were faired more neatly into the upper cowling shape for AS aircraft. This improved their streamlining and allowed them to be lengthened and enlarged to cover both weapons and engine bearers. The final shape of the new cowling was asymmetrical, being enlarged on the port side where the supercharger was mounted on the DB 605-series engine with a larger intake fairing. To the rear of this, streamlined panels were fitted to the forward fuselage, giving a much 'cleaner' and aerodynamic shape.

A new high-altitude propeller unit designated VDM 9-12159 was fitted to the Bf 109G-6s with the DB 605AS engine, comprising broader blades for the greater power output and torque. These replaced the VDM 9-12087 propellers on earlier Bf 109G-6s and preceding Gustav models.

The AS-powered high-flying G-6s used C3 96-100 octane fuel, which was critical in allowing the required boost pressure of the supercharger to achieve the horsepower needed to gain sufficient height to match or surpass that of the US heavy bombers and their escorts. The increased power offered by the DB 605AS engine was a further reason for the fitting of the wooden tall tail to late production G-6s, its enlarged rudder area giving better lateral control needed for the increased power/torque and higher performance at greater altitudes.



▲ **'Black 12' was a Bf 109G-6 'gunboat' with the R6 'gondola' beneath each wing containing a 20mm MG 151/20 cannon.** Malcolm V Lowe Collection

Operational highs and lows

The Bf 109 G-6 entered Luftwaffe service in the first half of 1943 and was operational until the end of the war. The first G-6s began reaching frontline units in February 1943, initially in the Mediterranean area, partly as a result of the intense fighting as Germany lost its grip of North Africa. The outfits involved were JG (jagdgeschwader or fighter wing) 27, 51, 53 and 77. All were veteran units in combat since the war's early phases.

The first recorded loss of a G-6 was on March 4, 1943, when an aircraft of 5. Staffel of JG 53 (5./JG 53) was shot down. One of the first Bf 109G-6s to fall into Allied hands appears to have been an example belonging to 6./JG 51, Yellow 13, a G-6 trop that made a forced landing in Tunisia during April 1943.

The Bf 109G-5 entered service in the late summer/early autumn of 1943. Allocations of both the G-5 and G-6 to Luftwaffe

An all-black Bf 109G-6/AS or G-14/AS 'Green 5' night-fighting Mosquito hunter of I./EJG 2. JB Collection

▲ **Many famed and successful Luftwaffe fighter units flew the Bf 109G-6 and its far less numerous cousin the G-5. 'Yellow 13' bore the well-known 'Pik-As' (Ace of Spades) insignia of JG 53 on its cowling and illustrated features of the mid to late-production G-6 including a short aerial mast and fuselage spine DF loop.** Malcolm V Lowe Collection

fighter units took place in Germany and Western Europe, as well as the Eastern Front, although the last of these was left behind until production grew on the new types. The G-6 duly began replacing earlier models of the Gustav series.

Eventually most – if not all – fighter units operational on the Bf 109 received G-6s, in addition to a variety of recce units. These included (additional to those already mentioned) JG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 25, 26, 50, 52, 54, 76, 300, 301 and 302; plus many smaller and ad-hoc fighter units. Recce squadrons included NAG (Nahaufklärungsgruppe or short-range recce group) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15. Two night-fighter units also flew G-6s, but not as the main part of their equipment; these were NJG (Nachtjagdgeschwader or night-fighter wing) 10 and 11.

Among the first recipients of the Bf 109G-6/AS were JG 1, 5 and 11. These 'AS' deliveries took place from the late spring of 1944 onwards. JG 3, 27 and 302 also subsequently received examples. The later Bf 109G-5 operated with elements of several units, including JG 1, 2, 3, 11, 26, 27, 300 and 302.

Although generally well-liked by its pilots, the G-6 was nevertheless ageing by the end of the war. For inexperienced pilots, the type's narrow-track main undercarriage was a challenge, especially on alighting, and a significant number of Gustavs were lost to badly performed landings that often ended in a ground loop and broken undercarriage. Heavier than previous Bf 109 versions, the G-5/G-6 series has been described by some historians as a retrograde step in Bf 109 development.

The demise of experienced pilots in combat was a constant headache for the Luftwaffe. One of the casualties was the highly experienced Geschwaderkommodore (commanding officer) of JG 1, Oberstlt Walter Oesau, who was shot down and killed by US Ninth Air Force P-38 Lightnings of the 474th Fighter Group on May 11, 1944, while flying 'Green 13', a Bf 109G-6/AS.

In attempting to counter the US bomber formations, the WGr 21 eventually equipped several units. One of the initial users was JG 53 in Italy during August 1943, which was becoming increasingly engaged in defending against Mediterranean-based US heavy bomber squadrons. This was followed by various other units further north, attempting to defend German airspace, including JG 3, 11, 27 and 51. Eventually the Luftwaffe fighter units protecting German skies were grouped together in the Reichsverteidigung (Reich Defence) organisation, whose units wore distinctive coloured bands around their rear fuselages to denote specific Geschwader. The Bf 109G-6 was an important part of this system.

Later in the war, the basic Bf 109 layout was further developed in a number of models, including the G-14, which was intended to encompass in one airframe the various modifications incorporated during the G-6's production run. Further development led to the G-10 and finally the 'K'-series.

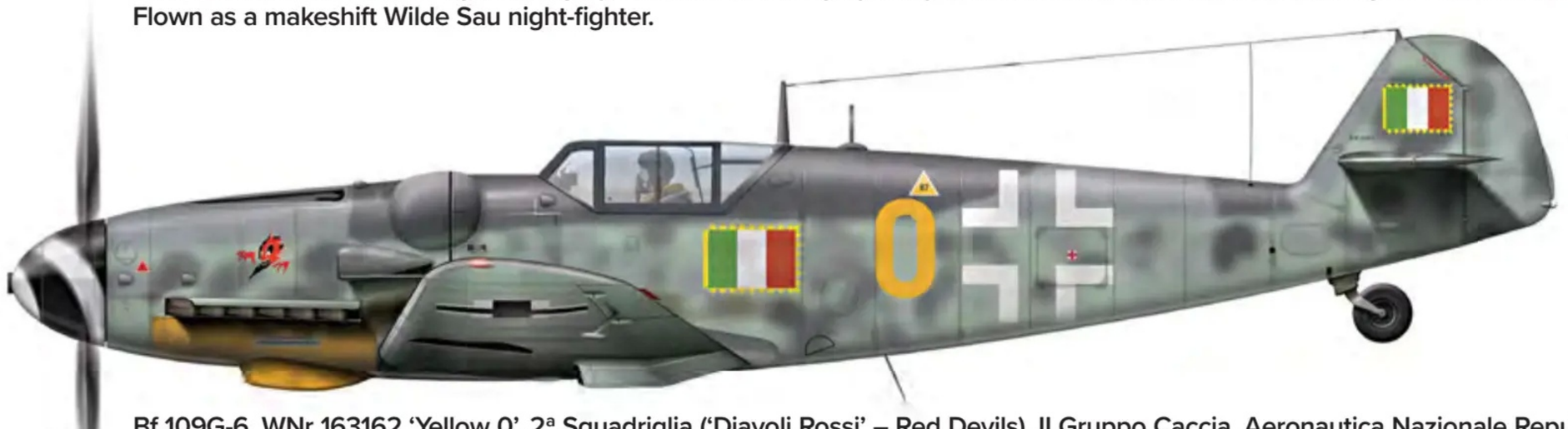
As a testimony to the Messerschmitt Bf 109G-6, the war's highest scoring fighter pilot flew the type and achieved notable success in the Gustav's cockpit. He was Erich Hartmann, who is credited with the never-to-be-beaten score of 352 aerial victories. During his career with the Luftwaffe, he flew various different versions of Bf 109 and it was the only fighter type that he used in combat.

AMW

A line-up of 21cm WGr 21 unguided rocket-equipped Bf 109G-6s. JB Collection

Bf 109G-6, MT-505, PLeLv 41, Luonetjärvi, Finland, summer 1950. Upper surfaces olive green similar to World War Two USAAF Olive Drab, undersides light blue like the World War Two RLM 65 Hellblau. White nose, wing and vertical tail stripes, believed applied for an exercise. Black/white spinner, yellow tips to black propeller blades. Finland made good use of the Bf 109G-6 in World War Two and continued using the type into the early 1950s.

Bf 109G-5, possibly WNr 110047 'White 1' flown by Oberfeldwebel Hanns-Werner Gross, 1./JG 300, Bonn-Hangelar, Germany, March 1944. All upper surfaces RLM 76 light blue-grey, with mid or dark grey wavy lines, lower surfaces black. White ring on the camouflaged spinner. Flown as a makeshift Wilde Sau night-fighter.



Bf 109G-6, WNr 163162 'Yellow 0', 2ª Squadriglia ('Diavoli Rossi' – Red Devils), II Gruppo Caccia, Aeronautica Nazionale Repubblicana (ANR), Verona-Villafranca, Italian Socialist Republic, October 1944. Standard RLM 74/75 upper surfaces with fuselage mottle of these shades, RLM 76 lower surfaces, German insignia added to with ANR tricolour flag. Yellow RLM 04 Gelb lower cowling. Black/white spinner. Red Devils' nose badge.

Bf 109G-6, WNr 161741 'White 5', 13. Letka, Slovakian Air Force, Piešťany, Slovakia, summer 1944. Standard RLM 74/75 upper surfaces with fuselage mottle of these shades, RLM 76 lower surfaces. German insignia on fuselage and tail over-painted with an unidentified dark grey shade. Green/white spinner, yellow RLM 04 Gelb fuselage band and wingtips. In June 1944 this squadron suffered heavy losses while intercepting a US bombing raid.

Bf 109G-6/R3, 'White 6', 7./JG 3, Bad-Wörishofen, Germany, October 1943. Standard RLM 74/75 upper surfaces with fuselage mottle of these shades, RLM 76 lower surfaces. Black/white spinner. Yellow lower cowling in RLM 04 Gelb. White comet marking on black background, appropriate for this aircraft which was armed with the WGr 21 unguided rocket system (note launch tube under the wing).

Airfix's latest surprise announcement is a new-tool 1/24 Bf 109G5/G-6 Super Kit; *AMW* editor **Stu Fone** tackles a test-shot of this complex and highly detailed offering

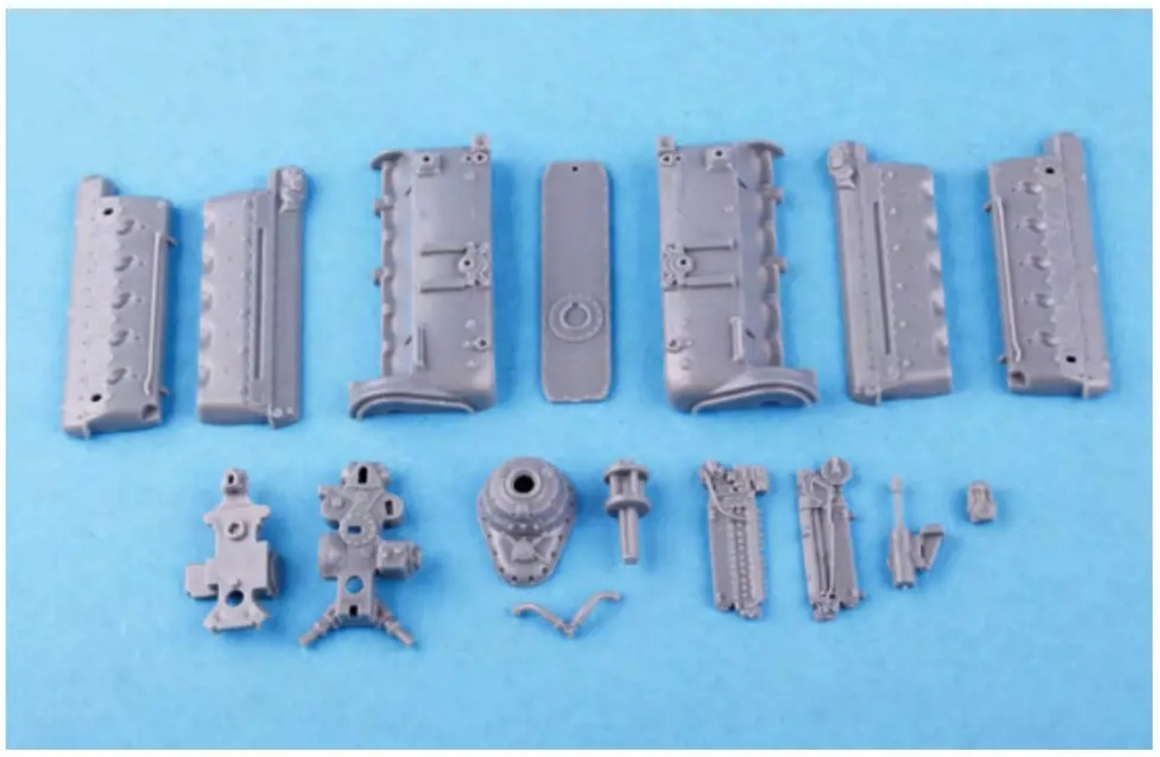
Die Beule

When it comes to classic World War Two aircraft designs, there are several obvious candidates, from the British Spitfire to the American P-51 Mustang. On the German side, there's the Messerschmitt Bf 109, and Airfix's recently unveiled, new-tool, 'Superkit' of the type depicting either a G-5 or G-6 variant came as a big surprise.

Comparisons with the firm's same-scale 1/24 Spitfire Mk.IXc are inevitable, and from this build, the overwhelming verdict is it has raised the bar yet further in terms of engineering, fit and detail. Neat design flourishes abound, from the inclusion of a pre-cut, self-adhesive masking set for the glazing and spinner spiral, to the use of labelled parts to ensure the correct items are fitted at the front or rear, plus left- or right-hand side. Additionally, most of these parts are 'handed', making it near impossible to fit them the wrong way around.

The instructions have also been upgraded, with profiles of the five colour schemes providing a potted history of that airframe, along with colour diagrams showing where specific shades are located on certain parts. These are joined by a series of CAD images at the beginning of each assembly module, providing yet more colour information – but also decal placement for

▲ The comprehensive clear runner supplies three different styles of canopy (early, pressurised and Erla), four windscreens, optional armoured glazing and even a fuel pipe.

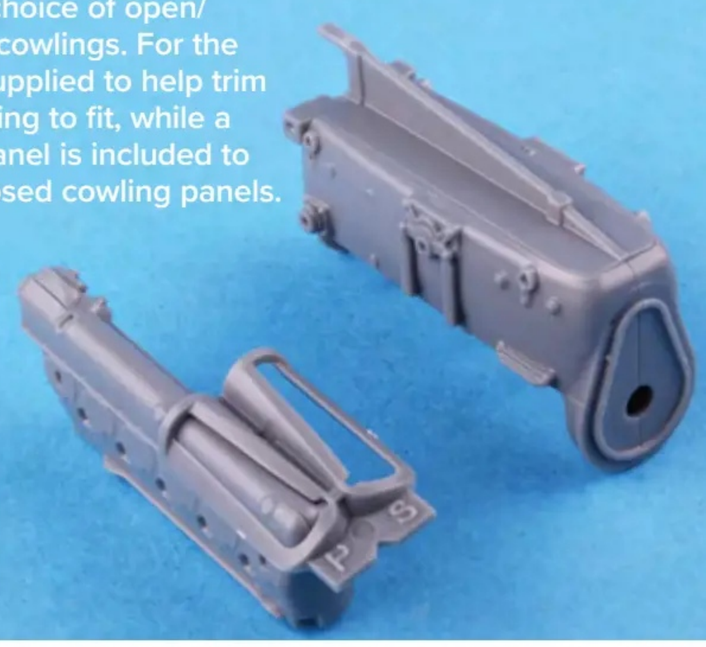


▲ The engine 'core' comprises 16 parts, all interlocking neatly and packed with detail. One or two sink marks present here were a test-shot issue and won't be present on the production kit.

MODEL SPEC

Messerschmitt Bf 109G-5/G-6
By: Airfix
Stock Code: A17003
Scale: 1/24
Price: £99.99
Available from: https://uk.airfix.com

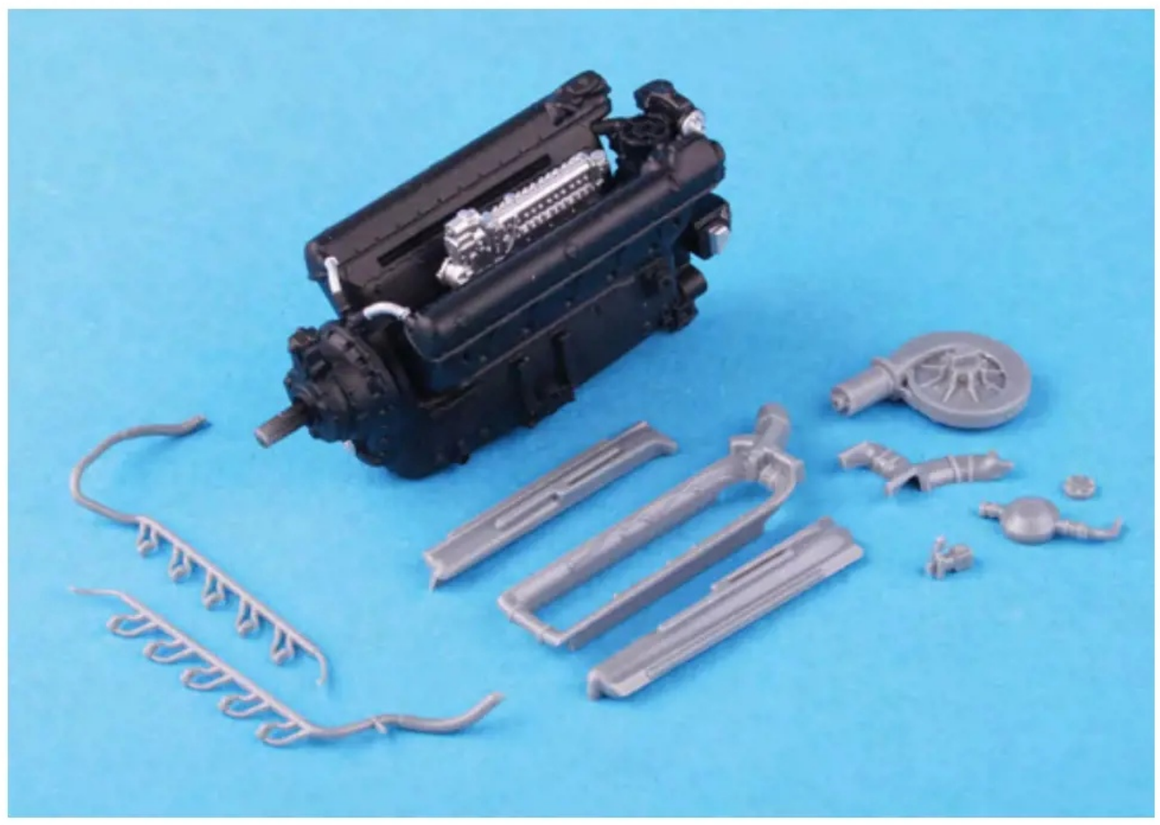
Airfix offers a choice of open/ closed engine cowlings. For the latter, a jig is supplied to help trim the engine casing to fit, while a different top panel is included to support the closed cowling panels.



the likes of the engine, cockpit sides and instrument panel. One significant addition is the inclusion of extra CAD images with labels identifying the various engine, cockpit and even gun pod components, making this an educational build.

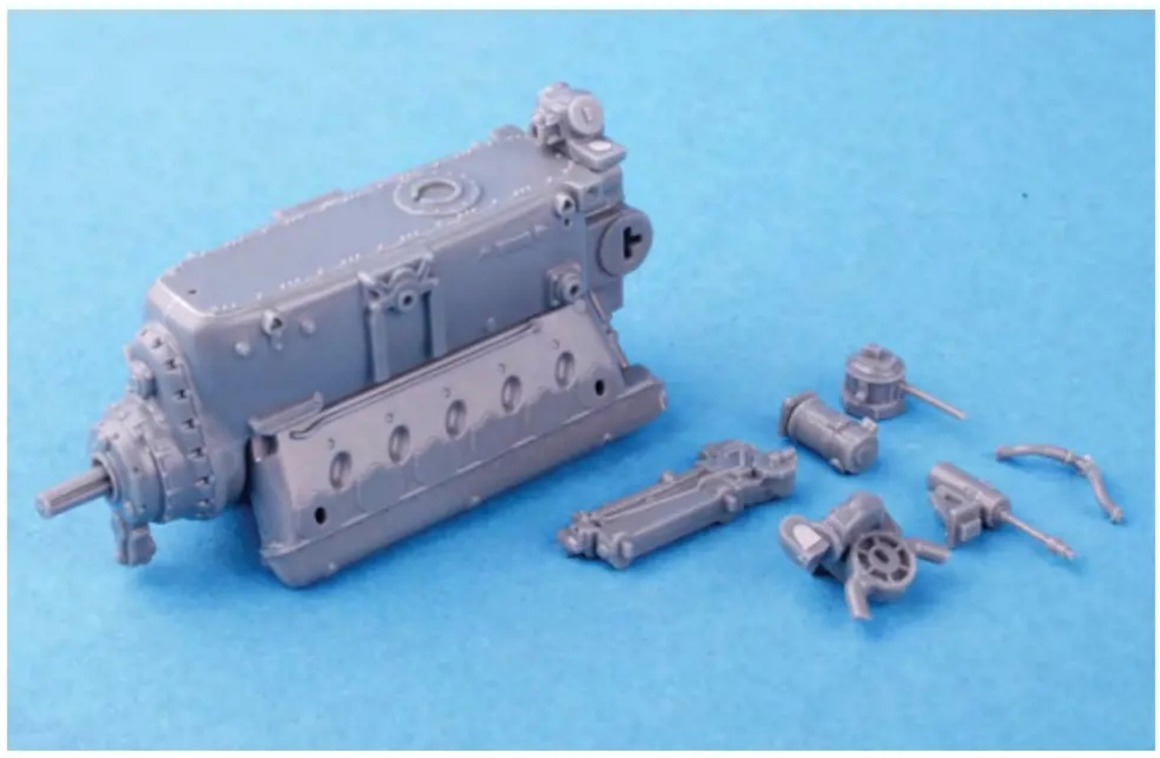
Stunning styrene

After studying the instructions (which makes my later build transgressions even more inexcusable) it was realised the manner in which Airfix 'segmented' the assembly sequence meant multiple sub-

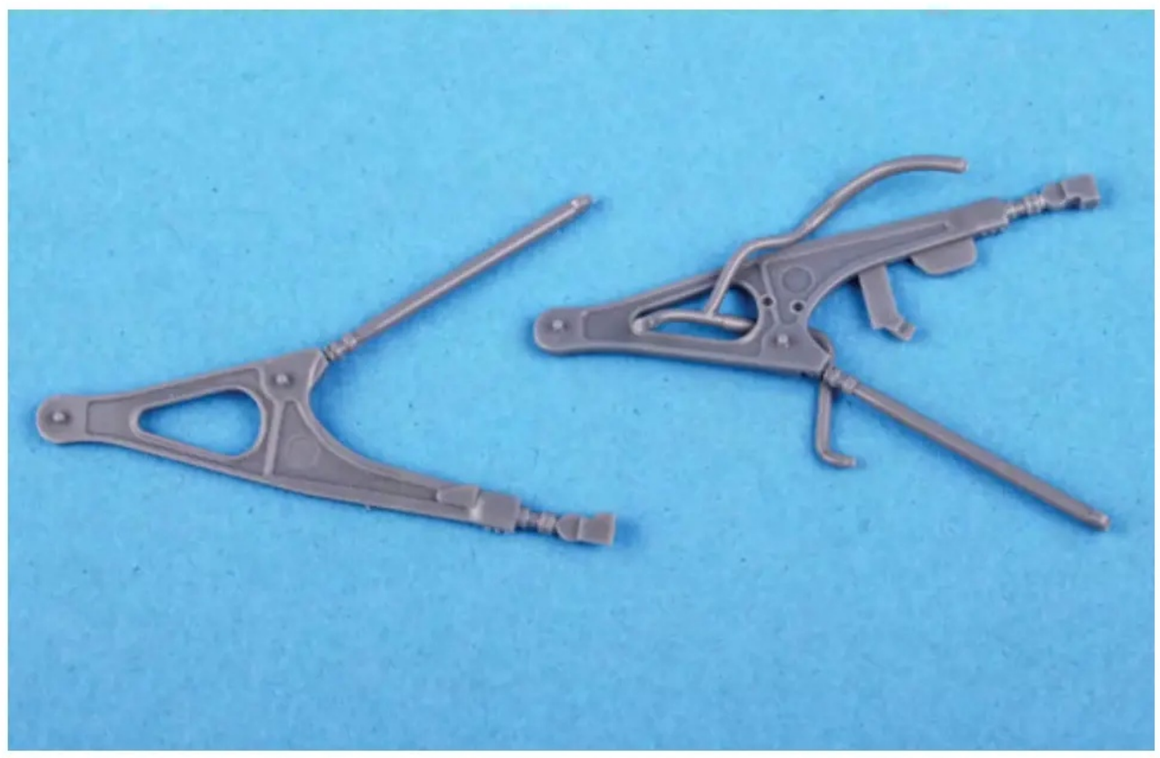


▲ The cooling system and ignition leads form the final elements of the inner layer of engine components – no more can be added until the core is decaled.

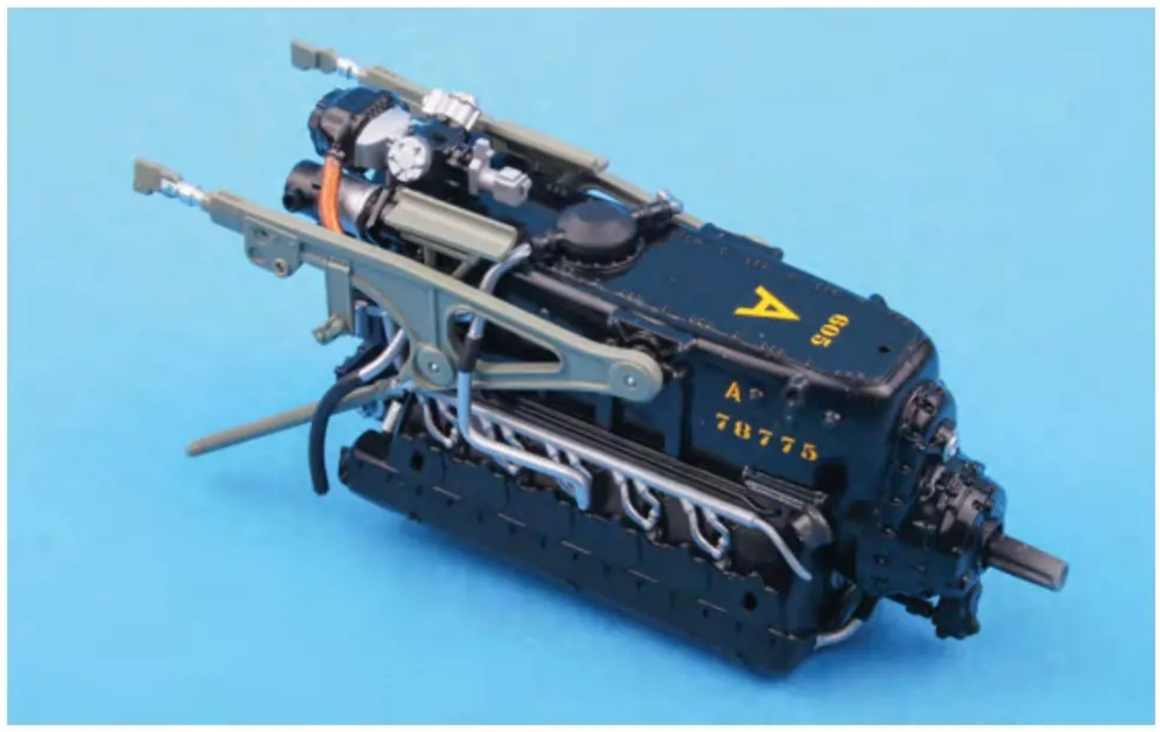
▲ With the decals applied to the main engine block, the inner layer is complete. Different metallic tones were used on the pipework and leads.



▲ With most of the core elements built, the engine's inverted V-shape design becomes apparent. The remaining parts for this inner layer will need painting before they are attached.

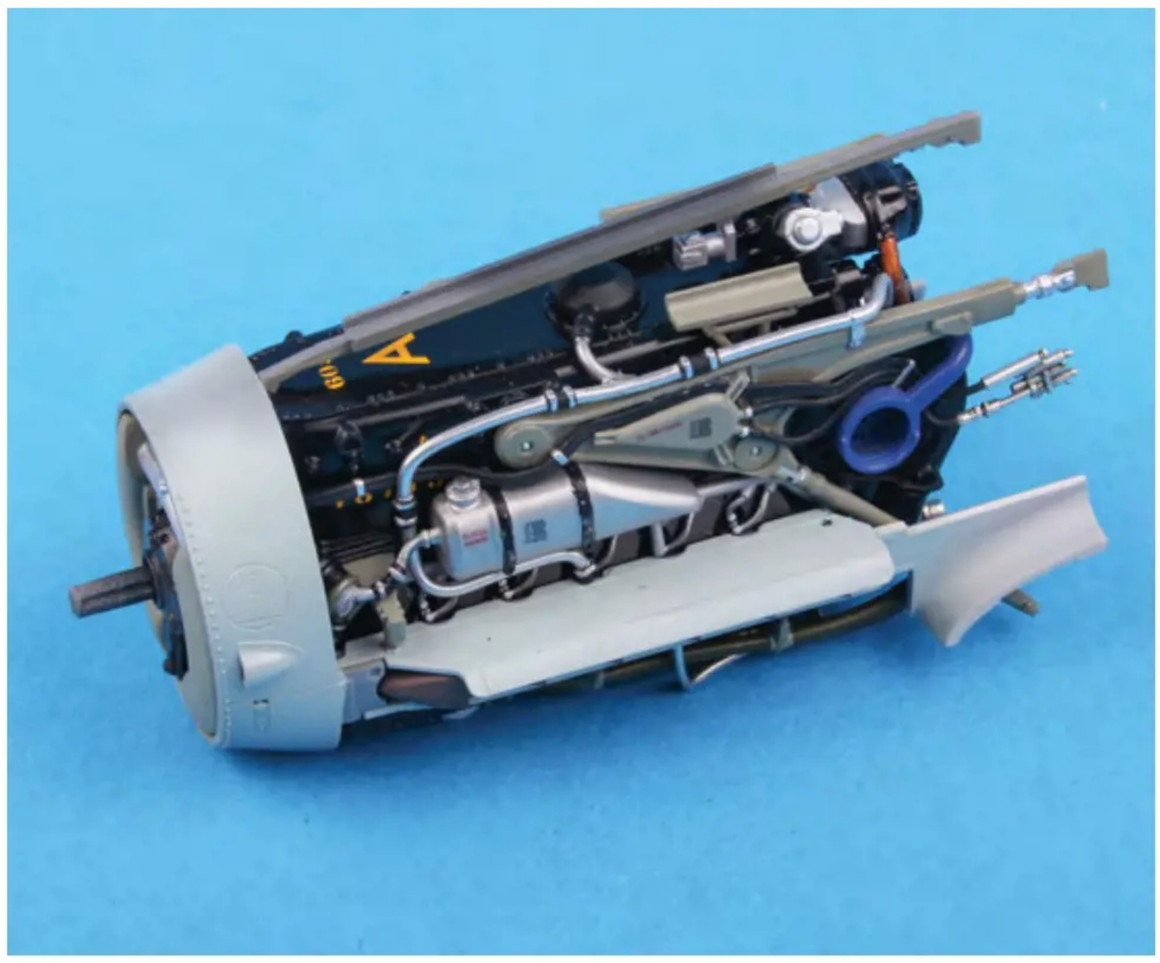


▲ As with the Spitfire kit, pipework passes through the engine bearer frames, but here there's no need for any cutting. Note, you attach the pipe using the two locating holes seen on the right-hand bearer.



▲ Engine bearer frames and the oil breather with pipework completed the engine's second layer.

▲ Here, all parts for the third and final layer have been painted and decaled. It was commendable how well the previously attached pipe ends and stubs simply clicked into their respective locating points as the pipework sections were added.



▲ With the addition of the front cowling, the final engine layer is complete. The pale blue tone has been applied in readiness for later mottling work.

KIT SCHEMES

Airfix has been typically generous with its markings, providing decals for five options. Keeping with previous themes depicting a common airframe, three show Werk Nummer 15270 at different times; first as a Jagdgeschwader 53 'Pik As' machine, then repainted after being captured by American troops in 1943 and, finally, in RAF colours after its transfer to the UK. The fourth option depicts a G-6 fitted with the later Erla canopy, while the final choice is the sole G-5 variant, this being a Jagdgeschwader 54 airframe, flown by German ace Gerhard Kroll (he crashed this aircraft in April 1944).

Notably, Airfix has decided to omit any form of Swastika from its decal sheet, to avoid any legal considerations due to its use by Nazi Germany. While understandable, this does leave the modeller without this insignia. Fortunately, two aftermarket companies, Xtradecal (X32-002 – it's a mix of 1/32 and 1/24 items) and Techmod (24005A) have both issued Swastika sheets. Both include the correct 300mm size and late-war style for the Bf 109G-5/6 and are available in the UK from Hannants (www.hannants.co.uk).

The kit choices are:

- Bf 109G-6 R-6/Trop, WkNr 15270, Yellow 14, Jagdgeschwader 53 'Pik As', Comiso, Sicily, July 1943
- Bf 109G-6 R-6/Trop, WkNr 15270, captured by USAAF, Comiso, Sicily, July 1943
- Bf 109G-6, WkNr 15270, VX101, RAF Collyweston, Northamptonshire, February 1944
- Bf 109G-6 (Erla canopy), WkNr 166224, White 10, Jagdgeschwader 3
- Bf 109G-5, WkNr 27119, Yellow 11, Uffz Gerhard Kroll, 9, Jagdgeschwader 54, April 1944

assemblies could be tackled at the same time, easing my deadline time pressures. While others may approach this kit differently, those I settled on were: the engine, cockpit and fuselage, wings, propeller spinner and finally the gun pods. However, for ease of writing and to avoid stressing my addled brain, this narrative will follow the flow as set in Airfix's instructions.

The runners – of which there are 17, including a frame for the clear parts – are organised in a way that many are 'themed'. For example, two provide all necessary items needed for the wing internal fittings and control surfaces, while three are dedicated to the engine, which gives an indication of how much work will be needed on the powerplant. At first, the idea was to represent a heavily weathered airframe, but after consideration it was decided to leave it relatively clean instead, to best illustrate the excellent detail on offer.

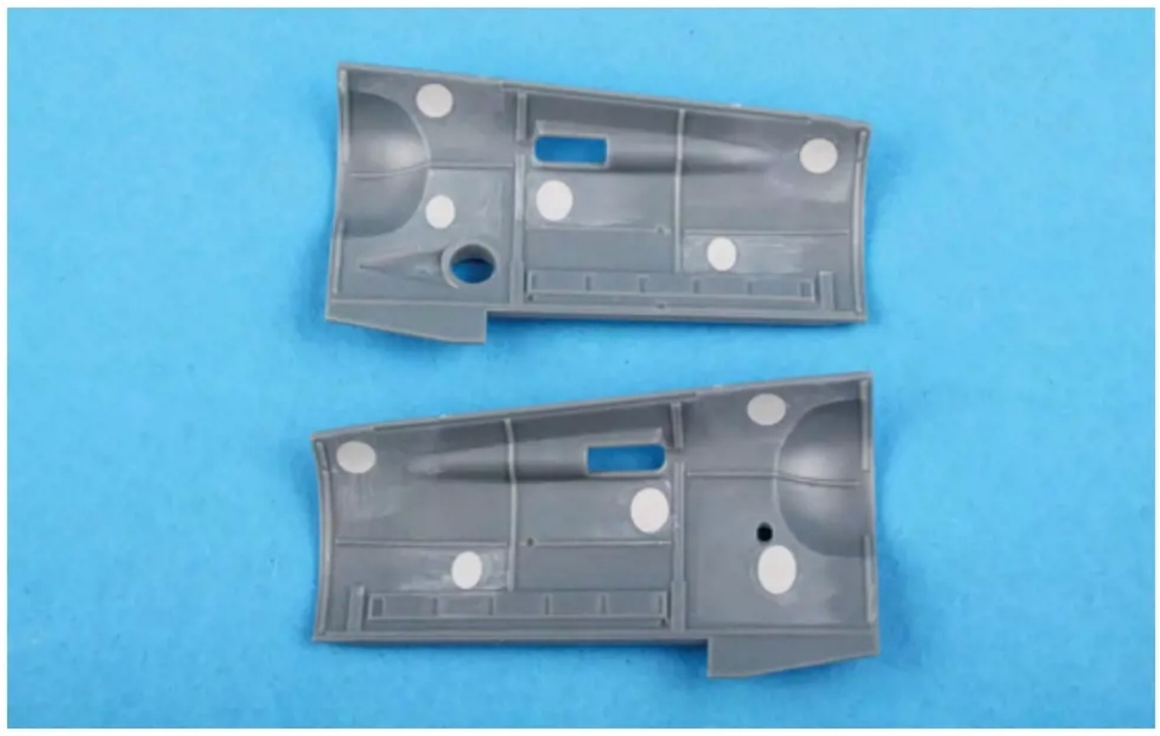
'Onion' engine

Much as I would have liked to prepare the parts for the DB 605 powerplant all at once, my prior study revealed this wasn't the best way forward, due to a combination of painting and decaling requirements. Instead it was a case of building in a series of layers, before committing paint – either a straightforward spraying session or brush-painted detail. This resulted in there being three layers, making the engine construction akin to peeling an onion in reverse.

This approach actually made for a more enjoyable build. Parts were prepared and assembled one evening, then sanded and/or painted the next, using Vallejo, Tamiya or Mr. Color equivalents to Humbrol shades, with detail work occupying subsequent modelling sessions. This staged assembly also helped when it came to the decaling – once the 'core' engine was constructed and painted, the gloss varnish prepared the surface for the markings while sealing the work done thus far.

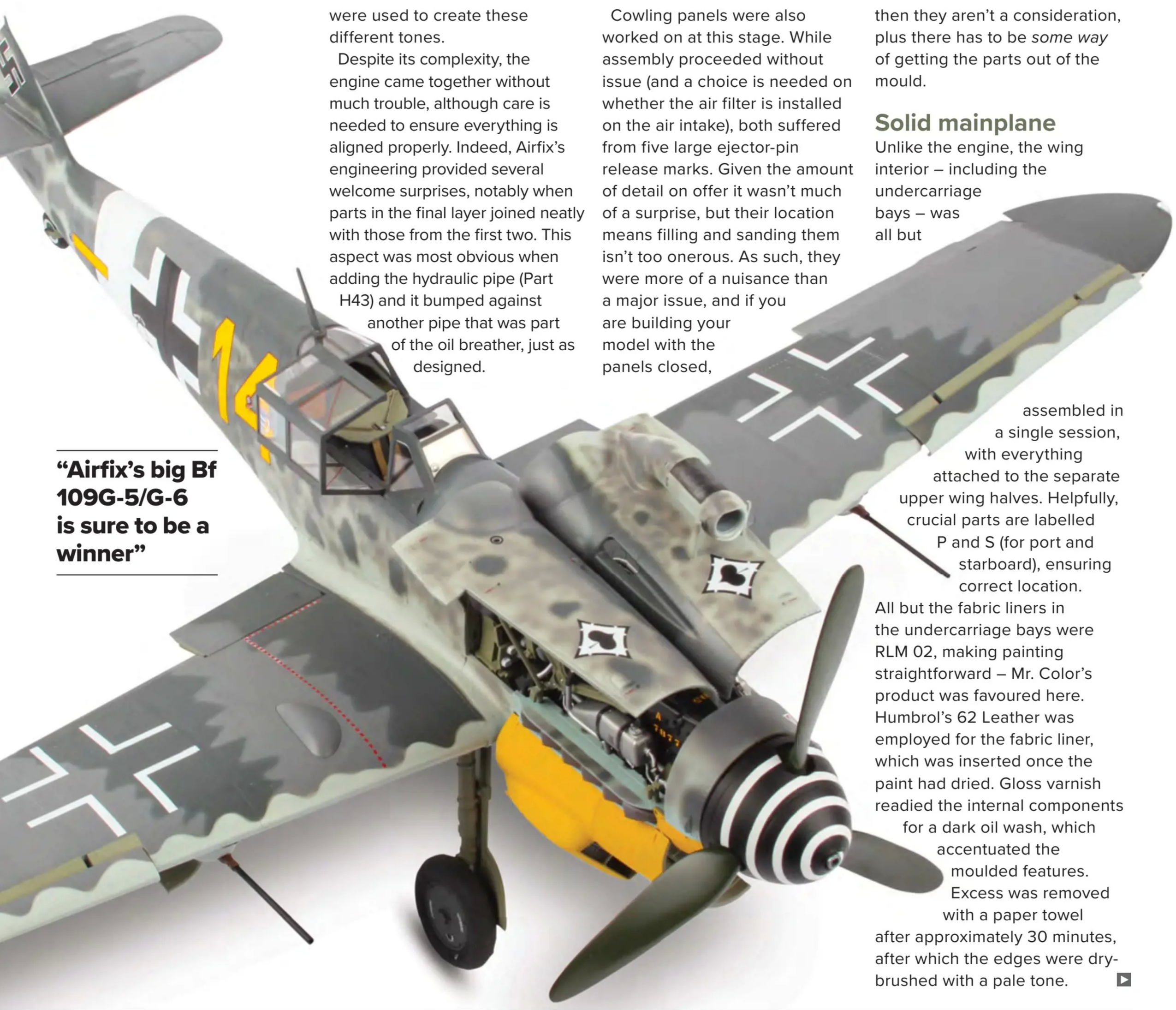
If you were impressed by the Merlin powerplant in the 1/24 Spitfire Mk.IXc, then you're in for a pleasant surprise: this is even better, with greater refinement and no need for any tricky pipework or frame cutting.

It's worth ensuring you have plenty of satin black, as much of the engine is that colour. Another aspect that's worth considering is that although Airfix suggests 56 Aluminium for much of the unpainted metal, different types of pipework would have been slightly different shades, being manufactured from various alloys. A combination of metallics from SMS, Tamiya and Vallejo



▲ While the moulded detail on both sides of the cowling panels is excellent, one unfortunate consequence is the presence of prominent ejector-pin release marks. These were filled with putty.

▲ The tropical filter as used on Yellow 14 adds five components to the basic air intake, including two bracing struts for the 'eyelid' inlet.



"Airfix's big Bf 109G-5/G-6 is sure to be a winner"

were used to create these different tones.

Despite its complexity, the engine came together without much trouble, although care is needed to ensure everything is aligned properly. Indeed, Airfix's engineering provided several welcome surprises, notably when parts in the final layer joined neatly with those from the first two. This aspect was most obvious when adding the hydraulic pipe (Part H43) and it bumped against another pipe that was part of the oil breather, just as designed.

Cowling panels were also worked on at this stage. While assembly proceeded without issue (and a choice is needed on whether the air filter is installed on the air intake), both suffered from five large ejector-pin release marks. Given the amount of detail on offer it wasn't much of a surprise, but their location means filling and sanding them isn't too onerous. As such, they were more of a nuisance than a major issue, and if you are building your model with the panels closed, then they aren't a consideration, plus there has to be *some way* of getting the parts out of the mould.

Solid mainplane

Unlike the engine, the wing interior – including the undercarriage bays – was all but assembled in a single session, with everything attached to the separate upper wing halves. Helpfully, crucial parts are labelled P and S (for port and starboard), ensuring correct location.

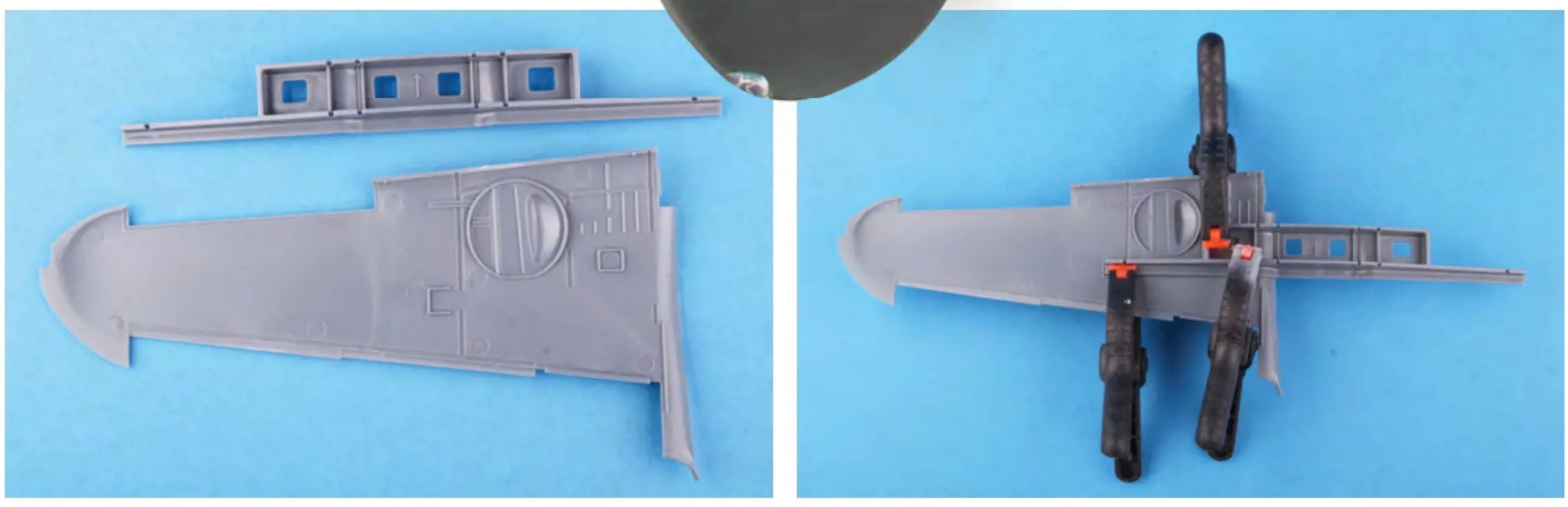
All but the fabric liners in the undercarriage bays were RLM 02, making painting straightforward – Mr. Color's product was favoured here. Humbrol's 62 Leather was employed for the fabric liner, which was inserted once the paint had dried. Gloss varnish readied the internal components for a dark oil wash, which accentuated the moulded features. Excess was removed with a paper towel after approximately 30 minutes, after which the edges were dry-brushed with a pale tone.

“Given the lack of Swastikas in the kit, items from Xtradecal were sourced”

A decision must then be made regarding the leading-edge slats and I opted for lowered versions, which requires a recessed insert to be added. Although these were left unpainted at this stage, with these parts added the wings were all but finished – all that was left was the lower wing ‘skin’ on each side – just remember to cut the relevant panels, depending on whether you are fitting the gun pods. Airfix helps the modeller here, with moulded depressions as locating points for chain-drilling the styrene. The panel was removed and the edges neatened with a file. Four holes were then needed for the gun pod and they were duly drilled. Once you add the lower halves, the wing can be set aside for later.

Painting marathon

Attention then shifted to the cockpit and main fuselage. It was here that most time was spent in terms of detail painting, due to all the moulded wiring looms, equipment boxes and harnesses. Parts breakdown is as expected for a Bf 109, with the main floor and rear bulkhead assembled separately to the sidewalls (which are essentially built onto each fuselage half) and instrument panel. Much of the interior was coloured RLM 66, so construction



▲ At first, the separate wings may seem surprising, given most Bf 109 kits have a one-piece lower wing, but Airfix’s robust wing spar section mitigates against any dihedral issues.

proceeded as per the engine in that respect. Detail painting took up most of the time spent on the cockpit, with a fine brush – and plenty of patience – needed for the cabling and switches.

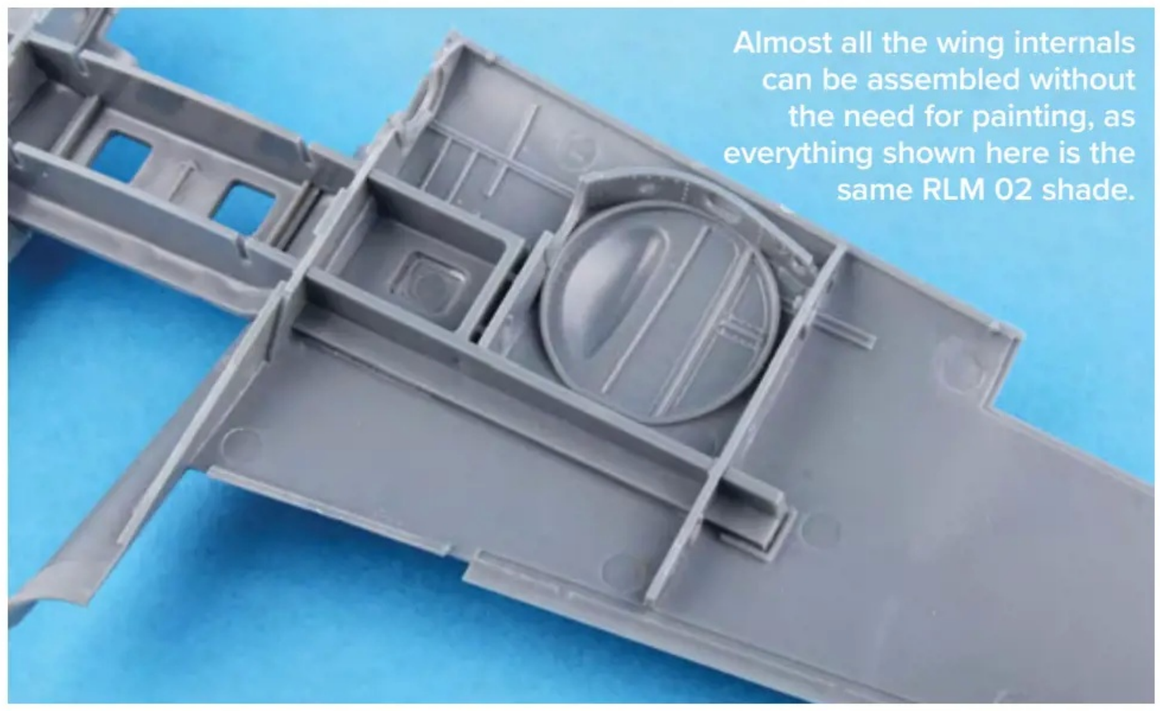
One notable difference concerned the seat harness. The straps were first sprayed

with Tamiya XF-57 Buff, before receiving Raw Sienna oil paint. After approximately 30 minutes, the straps were scrubbed with a cotton bud, which created a subtle shading effect in creases and around the buckles. Next, the edges of the lap strap pads were treated similarly, using 64 Red Brown and an oil mix of Raw Sienna and ABT060 Light Rust Brown to complement the darker shade. The buckles were then painted 71.065 Steel, but at first the solid centres were left in the Buff tone. It was only after fitting the lap straps and seeing how 'blocky' the buckles appeared that it was realised this didn't work, so the centres were repainted with RLM 66 to match the seat and bulkhead, making them look 'hollow'.

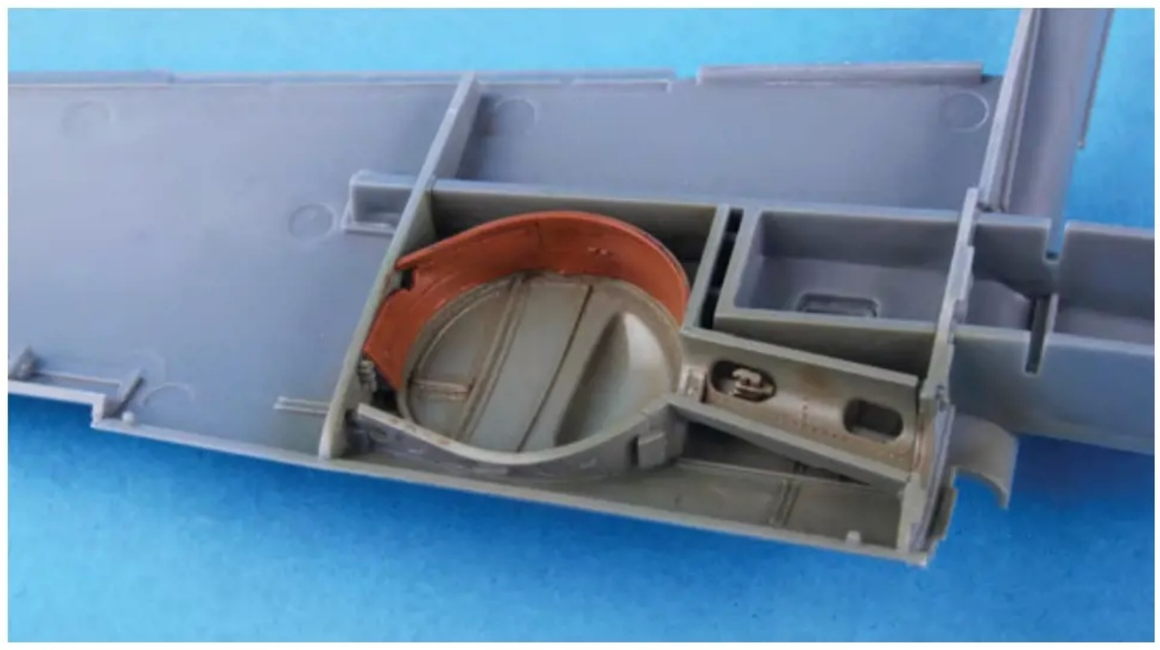
Tricky dials

Airfix provides all instrument panel dials in decal form. Initially, these didn't seem to work well, as they lifted when pressed with a tissue or cotton bud, even with the aid of decal solutions. The reason was probably the sheer amount of moulded detail, which made it difficult for them to adhere. After a mild panic over this issue, a solution was found, the decal being flooded initially with Microscale's Micro Set, before it was positioned carefully. As each decal started to settle naturally – patience is crucial – it was brushed carefully with Micro Sol to encourage it to bed into the detail. After several treatments, the instrument panel was then left overnight. The results were far better than expected, the decals having bedded perfectly around the moulded detail – although one slipped slightly, so the side was retouched with satin black. Matt varnish sealed everything, after which Deluxe Materials Looks Like Glass was used to replicate the dials' glass coverings.

After completing the sidewalls and cockpit floor, the latter was joined with the left-hand fuselage side and the sill part (C1) painted and attacked. It was here a mistake was made, with the rear panel (C10) added earlier than ▶

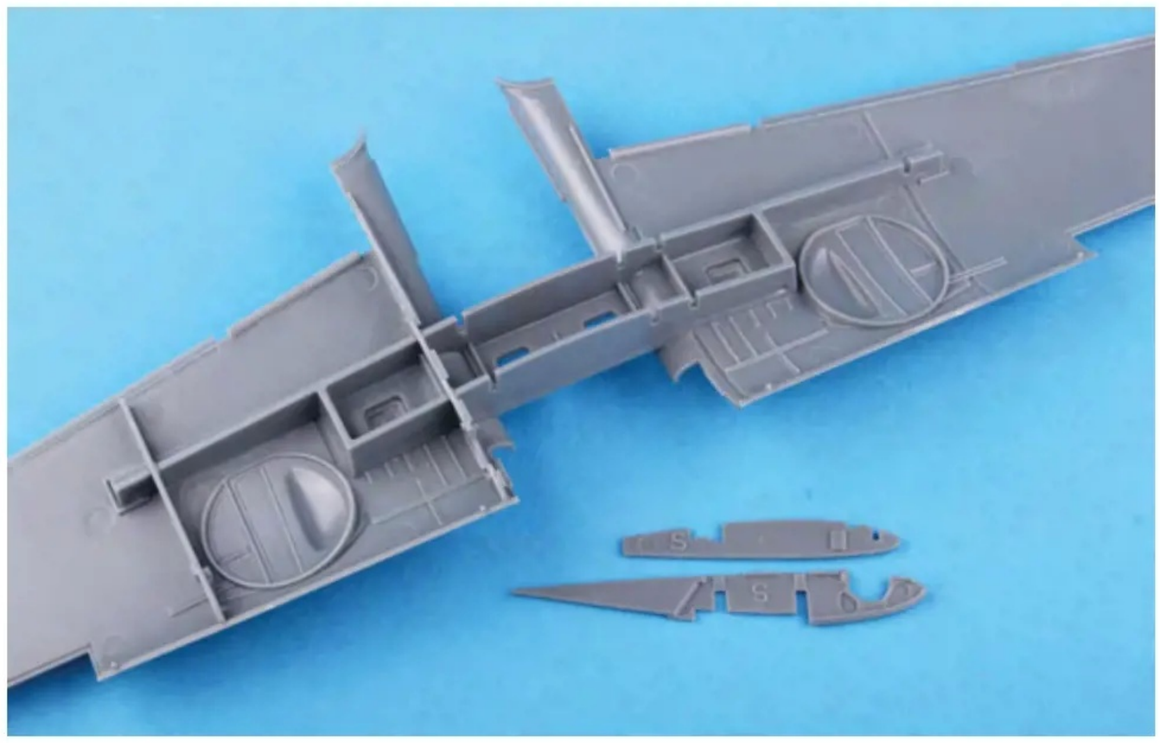


Almost all the wing internals can be assembled without the need for painting, as everything shown here is the same RLM 02 shade.

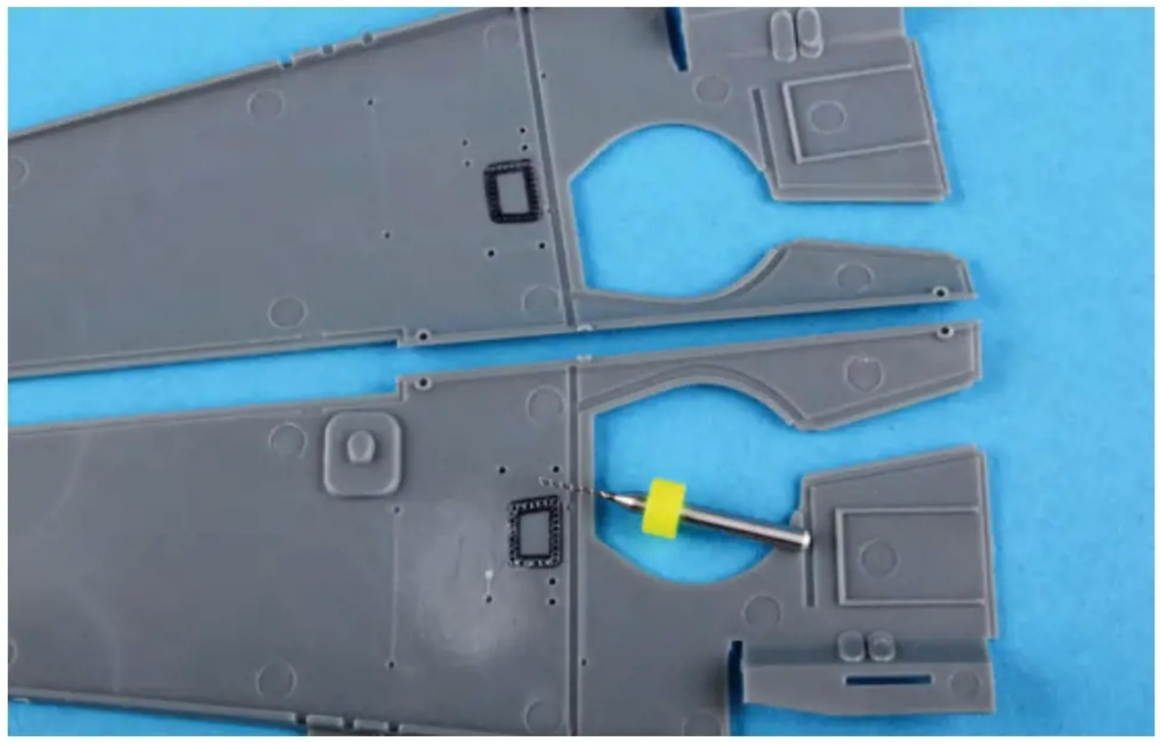


▲ Once painted and varnished, the undercarriage bay received a dark-toned wash to highlight the moulded detail. Here, the excess oil has yet to be removed.

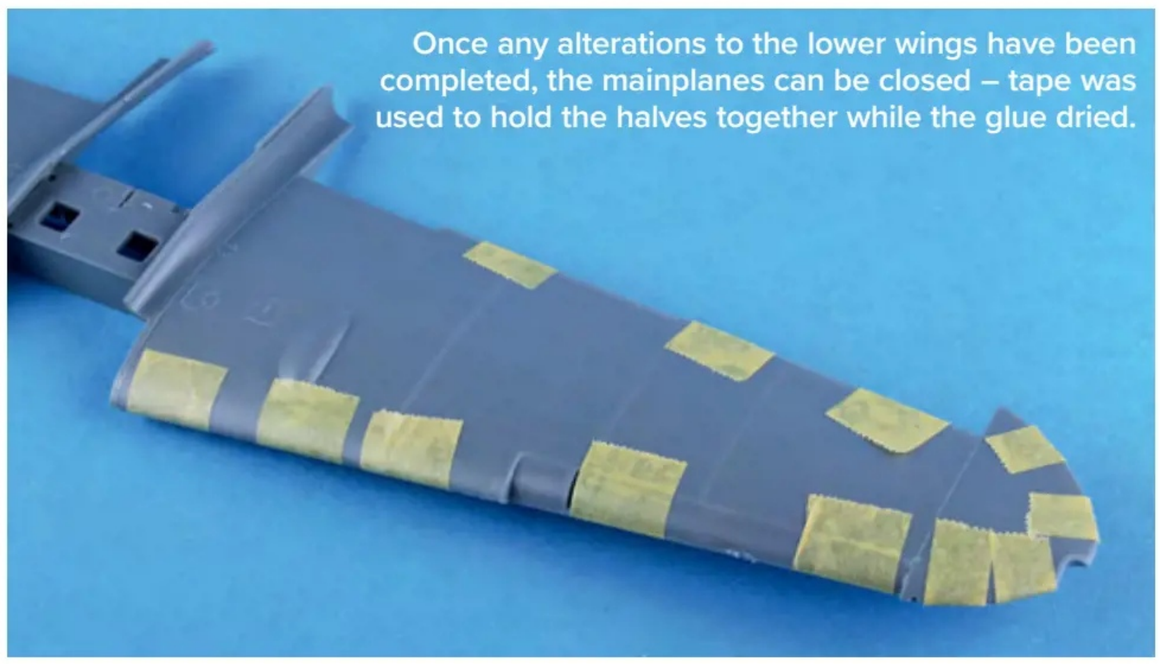
▲ The wing leading-edge slats can be posed extended (installed in the wing) or retracted (below).



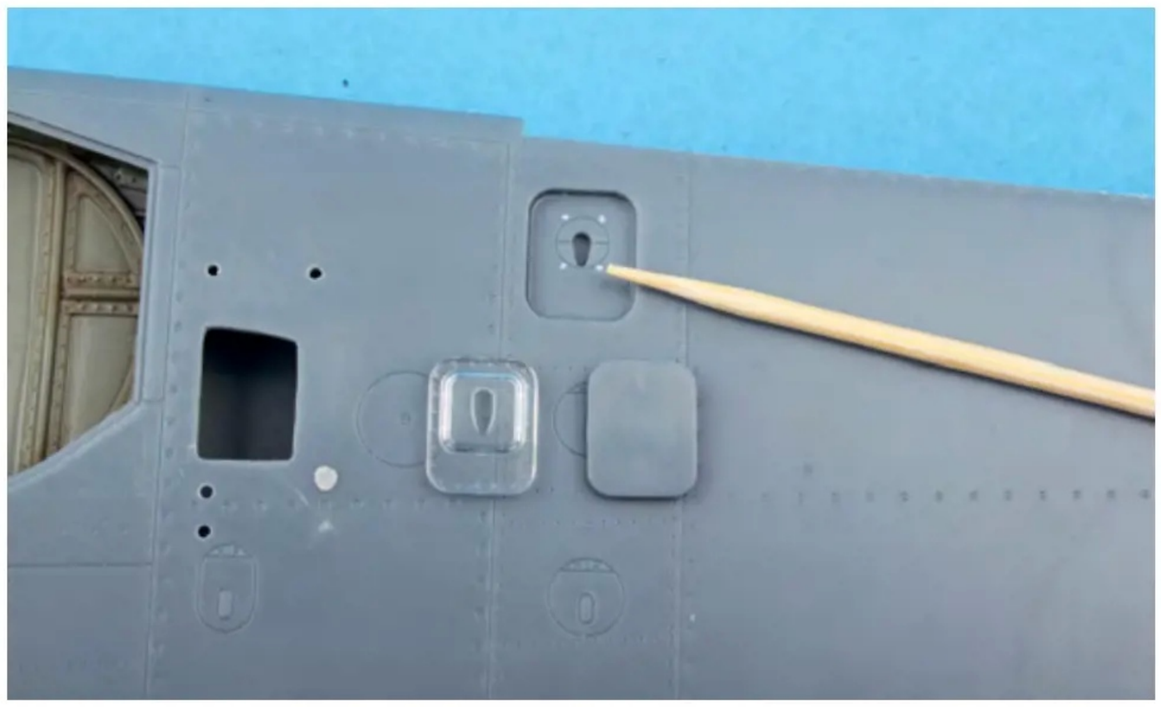
▲ Wing components are labelled P and S (port and starboard) - a neat idea that mitigates against attaching items the wrong way around.



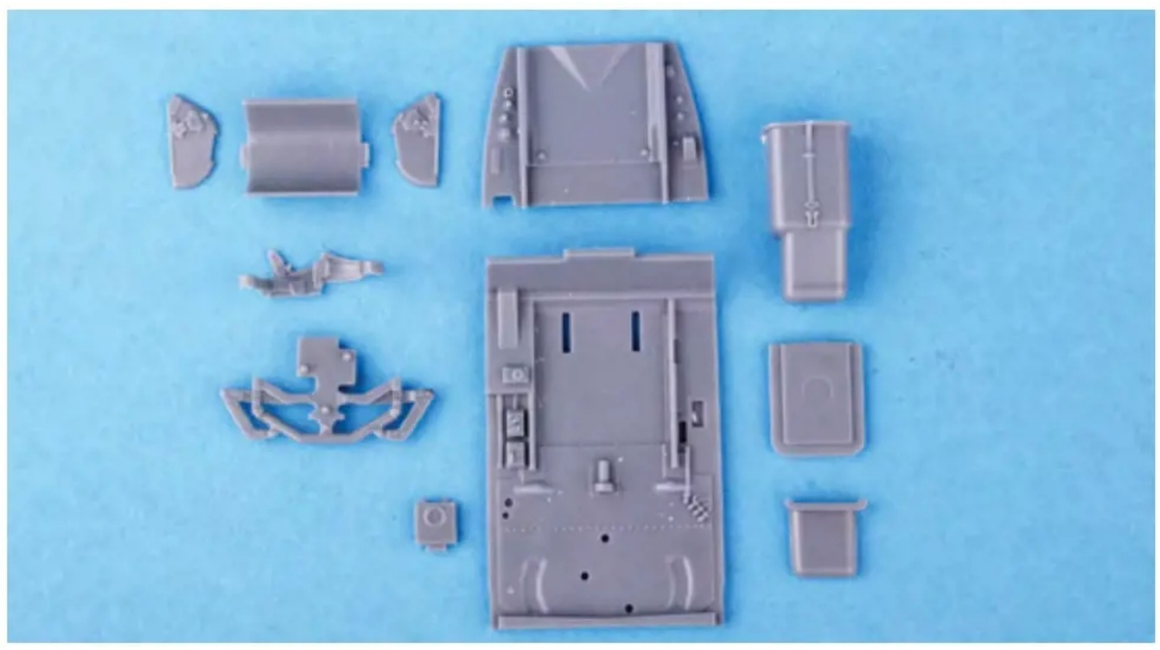
▲ If installing the underwing cannon gondolas, modellers will need to remove a panel from each wing and drill locating holes for these gun pods.



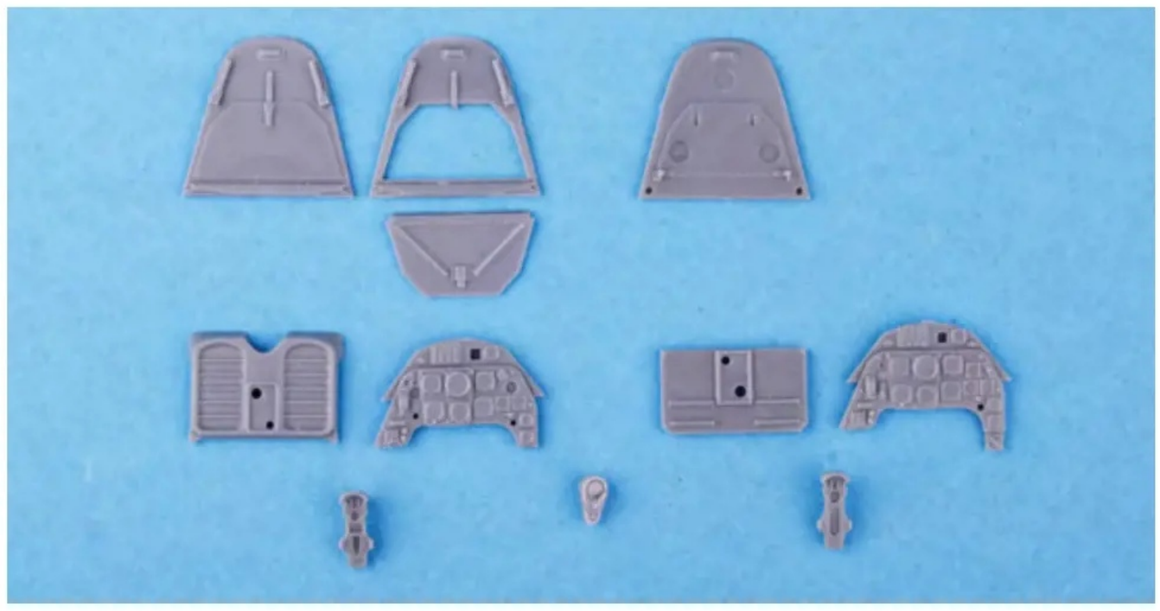
Once any alterations to the lower wings have been completed, the mainplanes can be closed – tape was used to hold the halves together while the glue dried.



▲ A Morane antenna can be fitted on the wing. A clear insert is supplied for this purpose, but the locating pins (indicated) must be removed if the blanking plate (for the other versions) is used.



▲ Airfix's cockpit is well detailed; show here are the three-piece seat, lapstraps, rudder pedal mechanism and engine-mounted cannon ammunition box.



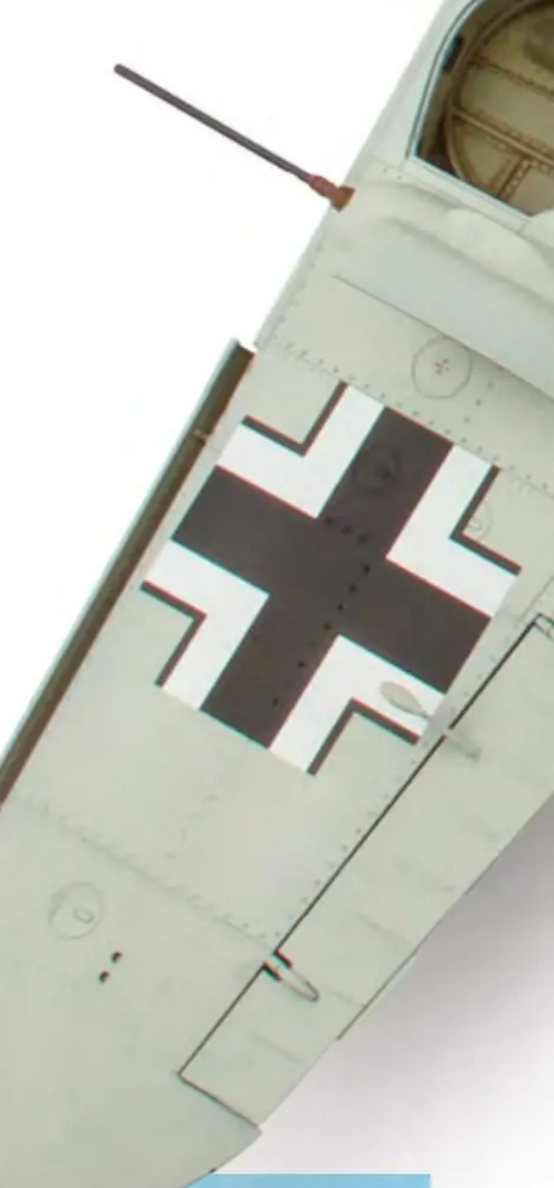
▲ Three versions of Bf 109 can be built: an early/late G-6 or a G-5. The cockpit components, including footpan and instrument panel, are all interchangeable between variants.

suggested – it wasn't apparent though, until the fuselage halves were about to be joined, that I'd missed removing a small section of the airframe in readiness for the rear glazing.

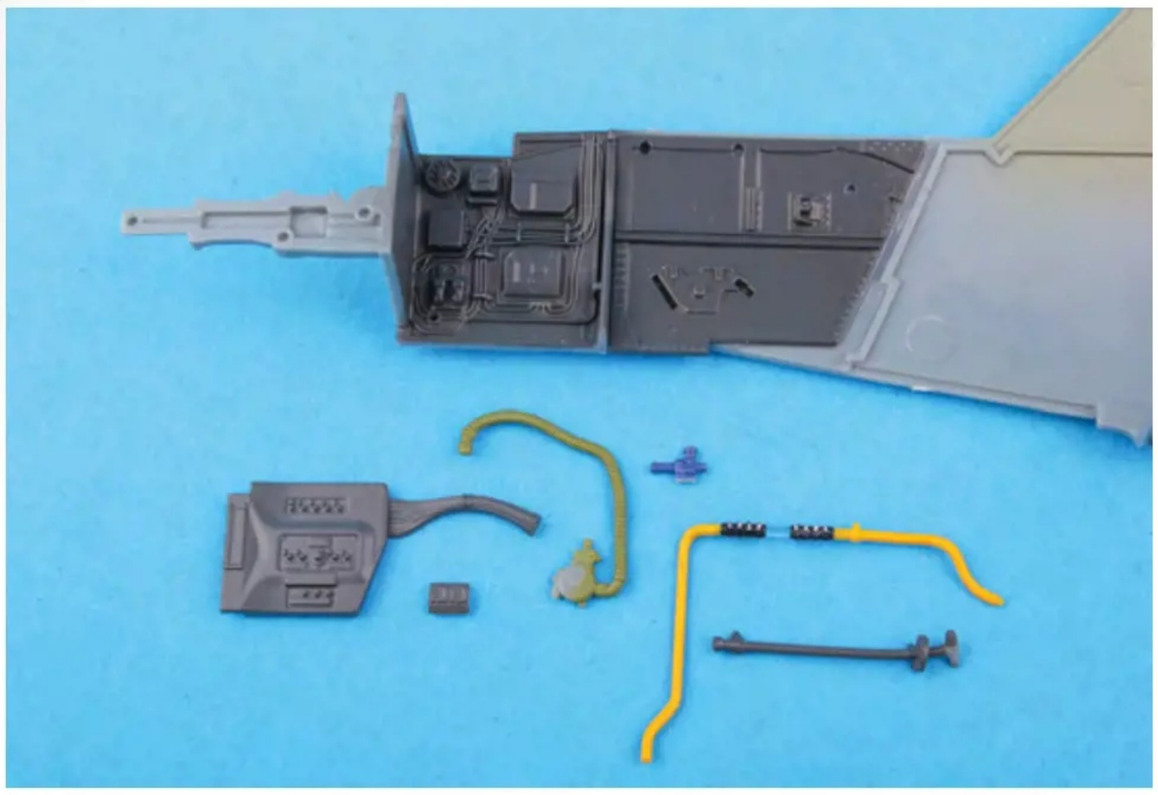
After correcting this easily avoidable issue (also known as read the instructions!), the halves were duly joined. It may just have been a property of the styrene used in this test-shot, but there was a degree of flex present. This meant it was slightly tricky to align the halves so that there was no step between them. Lengths of tape were employed to align everything before any glue was committed, but the time spend here was well worth the effort, as minimal sanding was required to eliminate any adhesive 'oozes'.

Wing fittings

It was then the turn of the wings to be mated with the fuselage – Airfix supplies a robust locating system, but the fuselage and wings will require clamping while the glue dries to prevent any gaps. The undercarriage on the Bf 109 is rather narrow in track and Airfix's approach for this kit is different to that on the Spitfire Mk.IXc. Here, the undercarriage legs are split, both vertically (on one side) and horizontally, with the upper, inner half moulded integrally with a bulkhead. The suggestion is this should be installed and the remainder of the legs added later. This approach was followed here, but in hindsight it would probably have been better (and neater) to build the undercarriage leg in



▲ The cockpit floor was assembled and painted RLM 66 before being gloss varnished in readiness for a dark oil wash. The seatbelts have received their initial colour and oil staining, but are just installed temporarily at this stage.



▲ Attention then shifted to the sidewalls. Airfix has moulded much of the detail integrally with either the fuselage half or as part on an insert, so there are surprisingly few parts to be added – these are all that's required for the right-hand cockpit side.

"Airfix had much to live up to with its 1/24 Messerschmitt Bf 109G-5/G-6 and it has more than delivered"

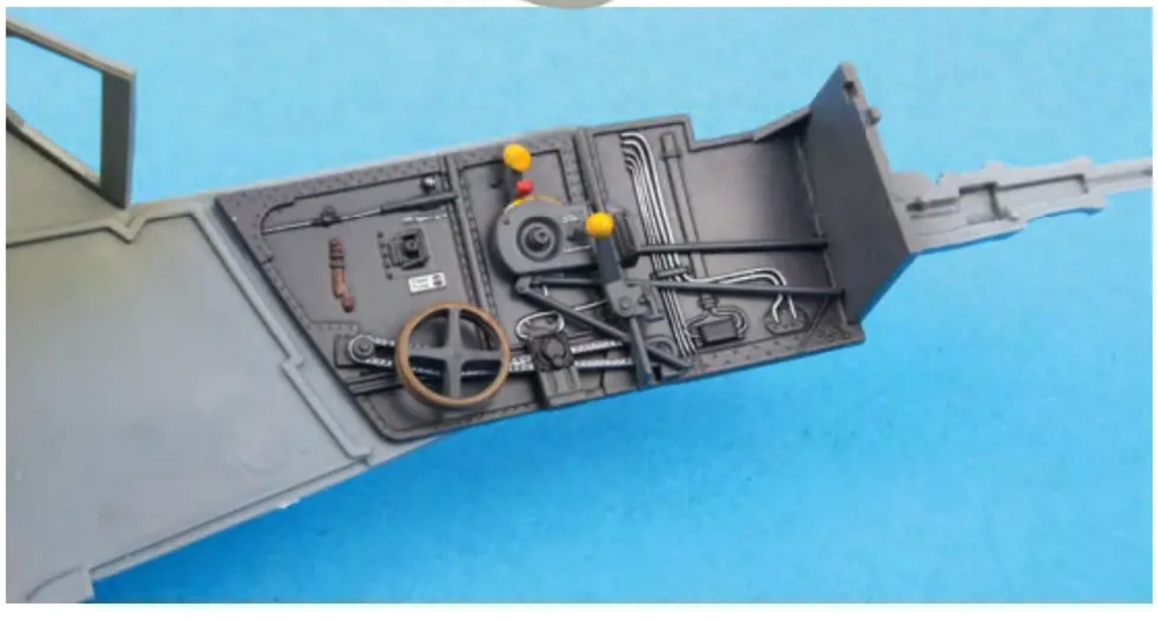
its entirety at this stage.

Note; you'll already need to mask the upper leg section before painting the airframe, so covering the remainder of an assembled version isn't too toublesome.

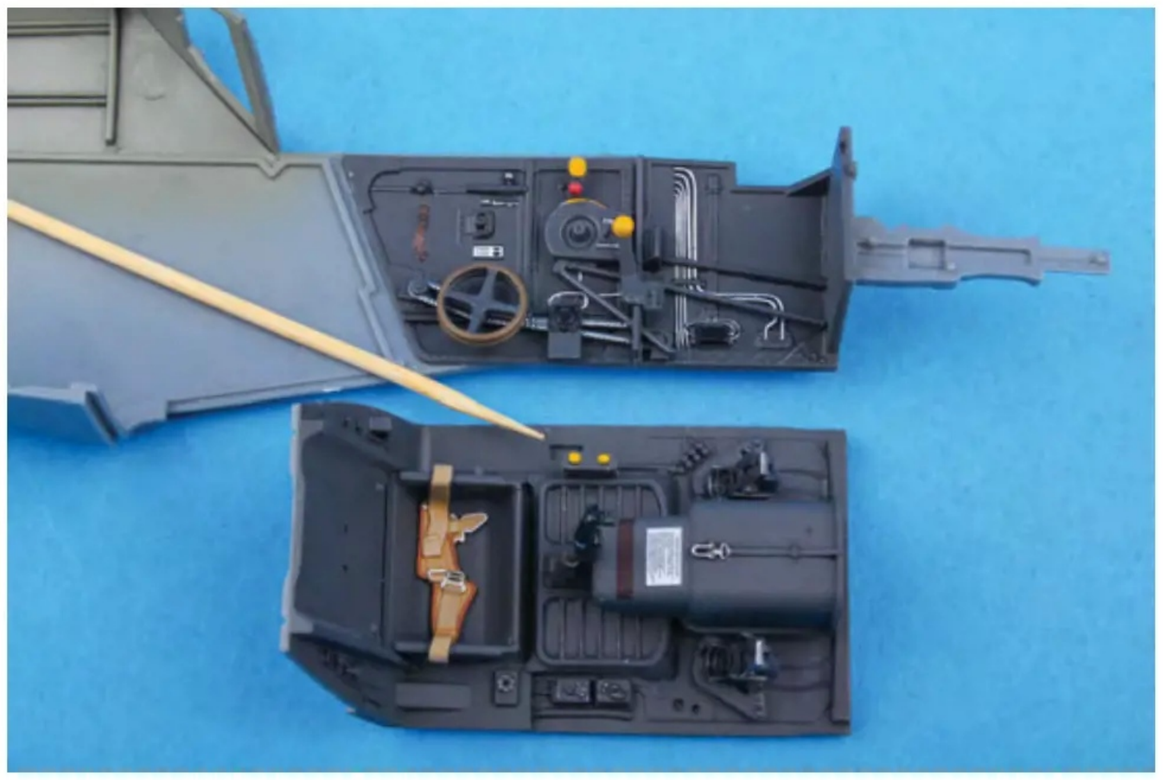
One of the busiest sections in the instructions concerns the leading-edge slats, plus trailing-edge radiator flaps, landing flaps and ailerons, with an option of having some or all of these open/deflected. I found it best to cross out any unnecessary stages once the decision had been made for open radiator flaps, lowered flaps and slats plus neutral ailerons. The last choice is needed as the ailerons would be in this position when an aircraft is on the ground – unless, of course, you'd tweaked the position of the control column in the cockpit.

Once the relevant parts had been selected and painted, assembly was straightforward and test-fitting revealed the stub/slot joins were snug. One aspect to note, though,

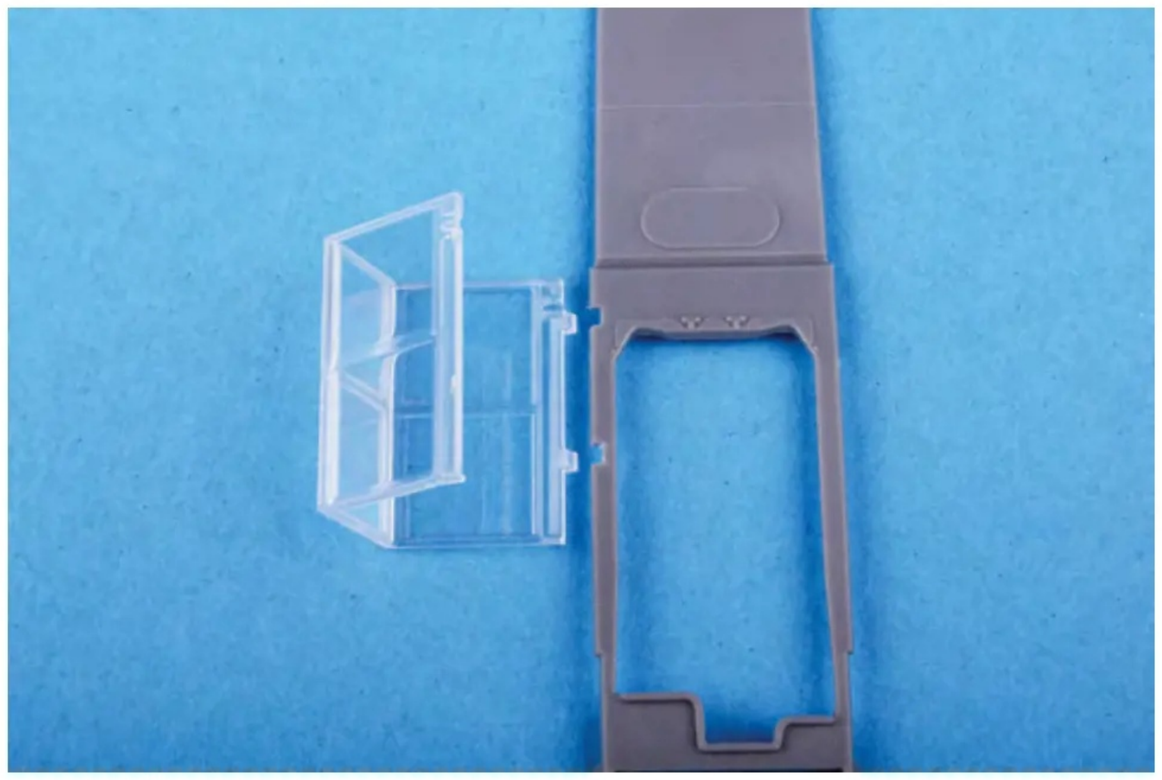
▲ With the addition of the lap strap pad edging and a metallic tone for the buckles, the harness was glued into position. At this stage, the solid section of the buckles was still its original buff tone. A matt varnish sealed the work to date.



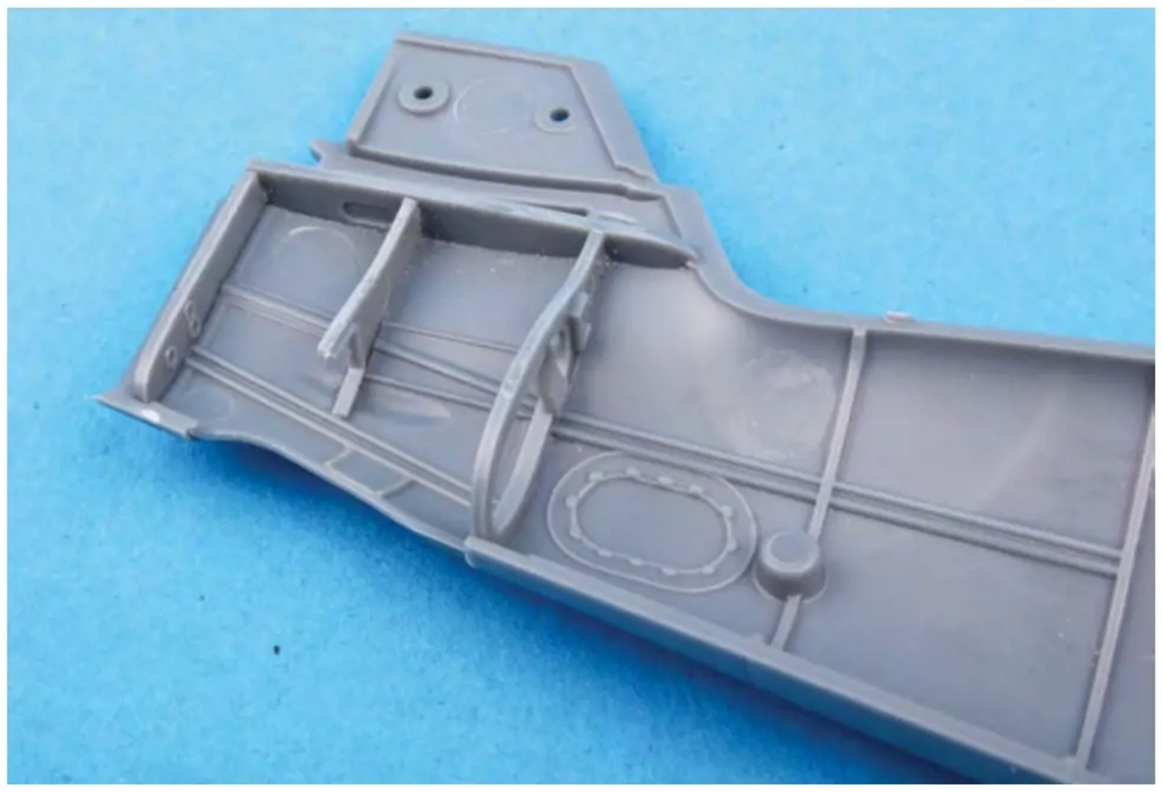
▲ It was a similar story with the left-hand side, but in what would be a recurring theme, the biggest task at each stage was the detail painting, which added considerably to the finished sub-assembly's appearance.



▲ When attaching the cockpit floor to the left-hand fuselage half, it's best to bring it up from the bottom, as there's a recess in the former (indicated by the cocktail stick) that serves as a locating point for the control unit (immediately above the recess).



▲ If you're modelling the Bf 109 with an open canopy, you need to open the two recessed locating points on the cockpit sill component before it's attached to the fuselage.

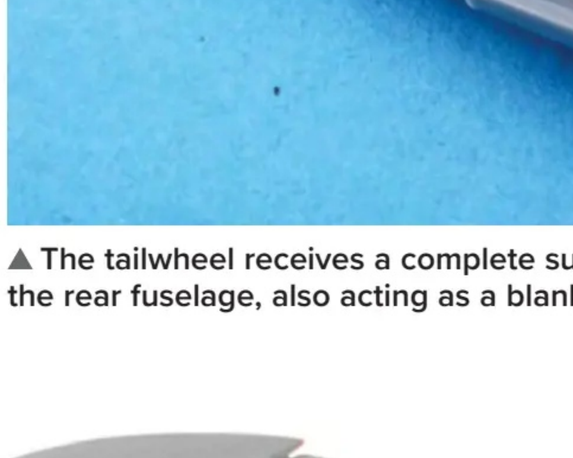


▲ The tailwheel receives a complete support structure, which fits neatly within the rear fuselage, also acting as a blanking plate for the rudder.

was that the inner sides of the radiator flaps all had three large ejector-pin release marks, which required filling and sanding before any work could begin. The outer faces of each item were then painted separately to the main airframe and added later.

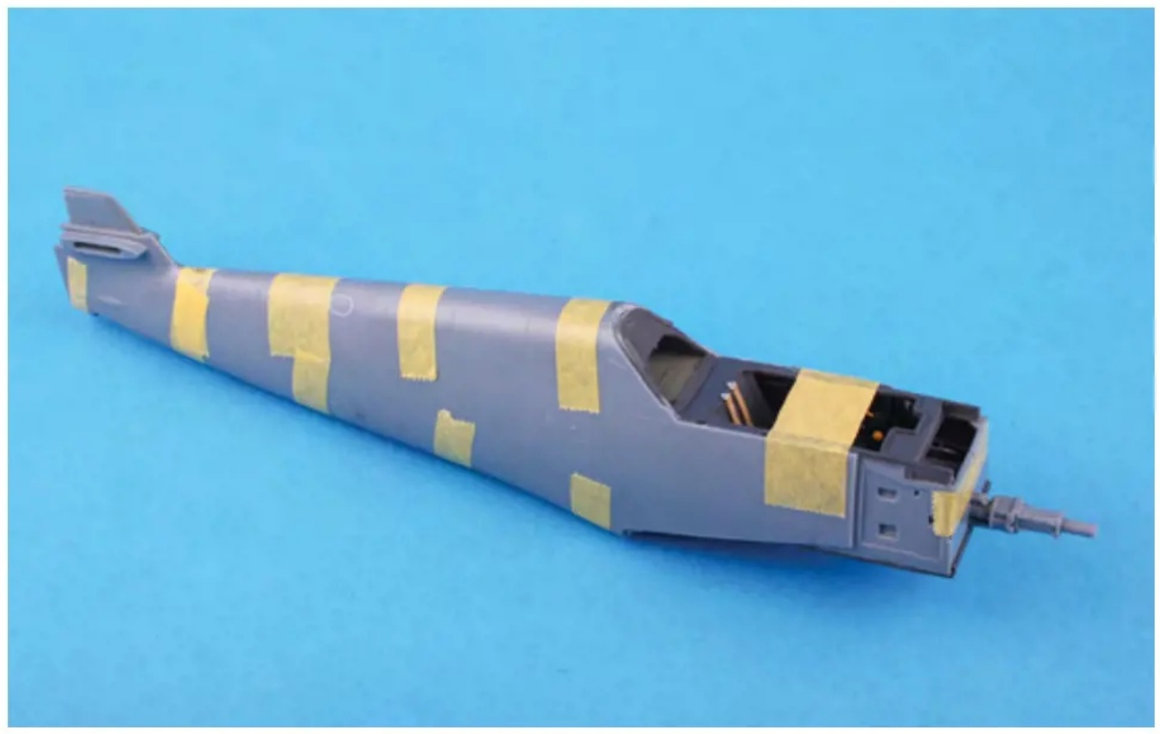
The gun pods and centreline rack were also built at this time. No issues were encountered here, although it's advisable to keep the mating surfaces clear from paint, especially on the gun pod door, as otherwise the join is weak and easily knocked off (guess how that nugget of information was discovered...).

"Making the engine construction akin to peeling an onion in reverse"



▲ The shoulder straps were painted as per the lower harness, but having seen how fake the solid buckle appeared, it was decided to paint the 'centres' RLM 66 to match the cockpit colour.

▲ The cockpit sill was installed, at which point it was realised the rear panel had been attached not just too early, but also before the fuselage sides were trimmed for the rear canopy component. Remedial work was needed before the halves could be joined.



▲ When bringing the fuselage halves together, it was noticeable that the styrene was slightly 'springy', which made achieving a level join slightly tricky. The solution was to use tape as an alignment aid before glue was committed.

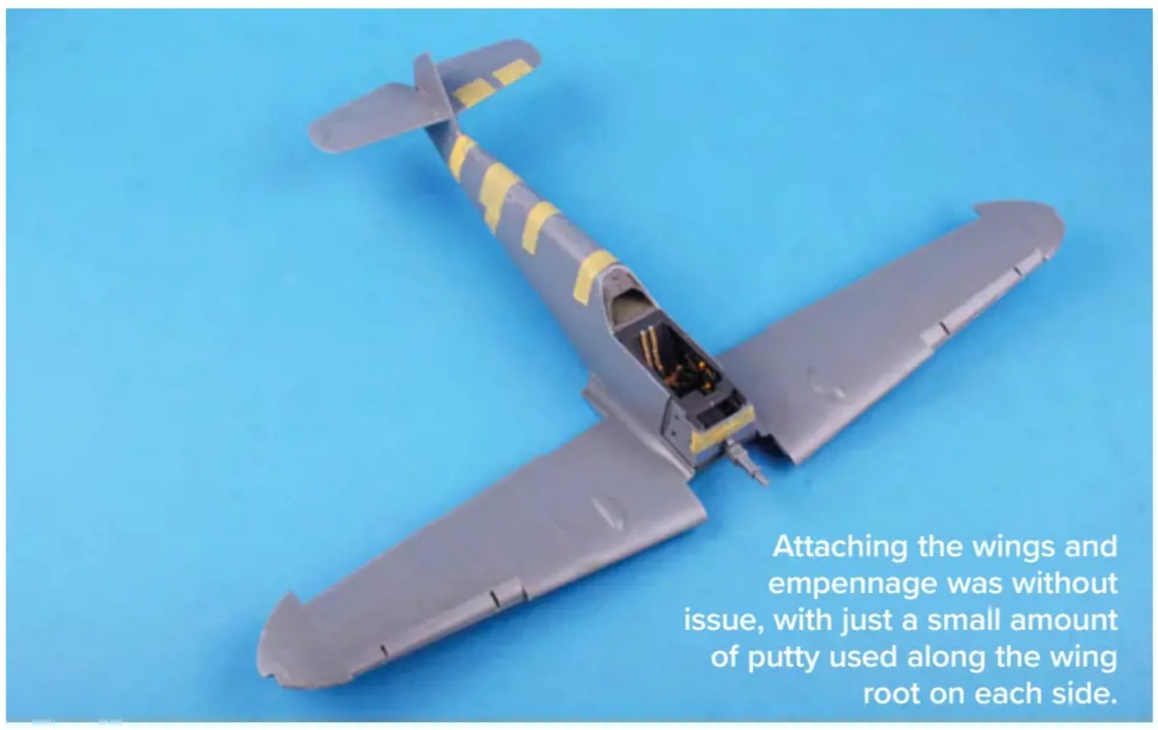
Tail first

As the completed fuselage finally started to emerge from all the sub-assemblies, a common modelling dilemma became apparent: how to handle the Bf 109 during the painting stages, particularly as the upper/lower demarcation was higher than my usual subjects. In the end, the simplest solution proved most suitable: using the theatre identification band as a 'handling break'. Thist also meant painting could start while the final parts were prepared for the model's front section.

Now, when it comes to airbrushes I've long been a fan of Iwata products and my current general 'go-to' is a Takumi Eclipse. When it came to the large amount of freehand spraying needed for a late-war Luftwaffe airframe, from the mottle to the zig-zag patterns on the wings, I'd need to use another airbrush. Having received a Mr. Hobby Procon Boy PS-270 for evaluation (supplied by Albion Hobbies), this was too good an opportunity to miss. Additionally, this airbrush proved more amenable than my usual fine detail airbrush to creating the mottles and irregular paint demarcations during a series of trial sessions. Additionally, SMS Paints were selected as the ideal candidate for the colours, through that firm's RLM 74, 75 and 76. Other tones, such as RLM 04 and white, would be represented by my current favoured Tamiya and Mr. Hobby/Color products respectively.

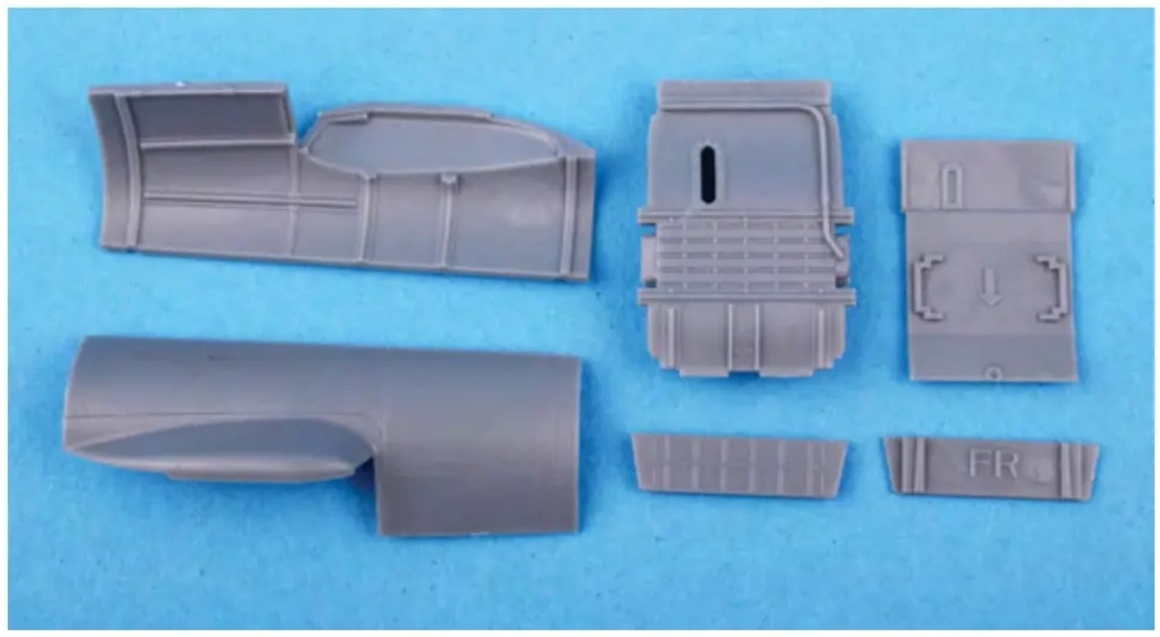
Without further ado, the white theatre band was airbrushed freehand using LP-04 Matt White and, after 24 hours' drying, this was masked and the entire tail section (with the exception of the horizontal stabiliser upper surfaces) was sprayed with PL189 RLM 76 Lichtblau.

A rough demarcation height was determined on each side (this being placed on the masking tape so as not to interfere with the painting), after which PL188 Grauviolett RLM 75 was applied freehand. Lighter shades of this colour

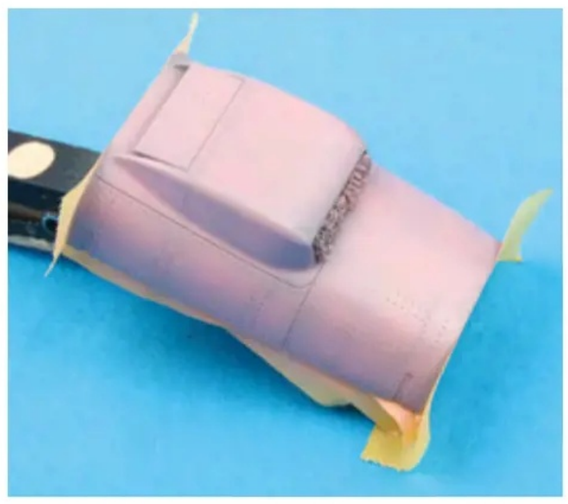


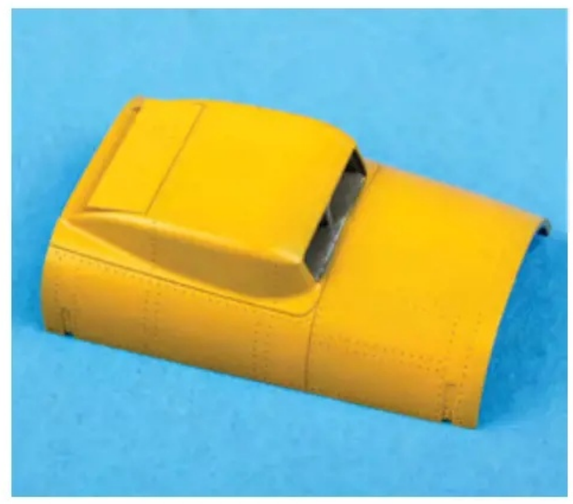
Attaching the wings and empennage was without issue, with just a small amount of putty used along the wing root on each side.

▲ Initially, the decals wouldn't settle on the instrument panel, but patience and decal solution came to the rescue. The result was surprisingly successful.

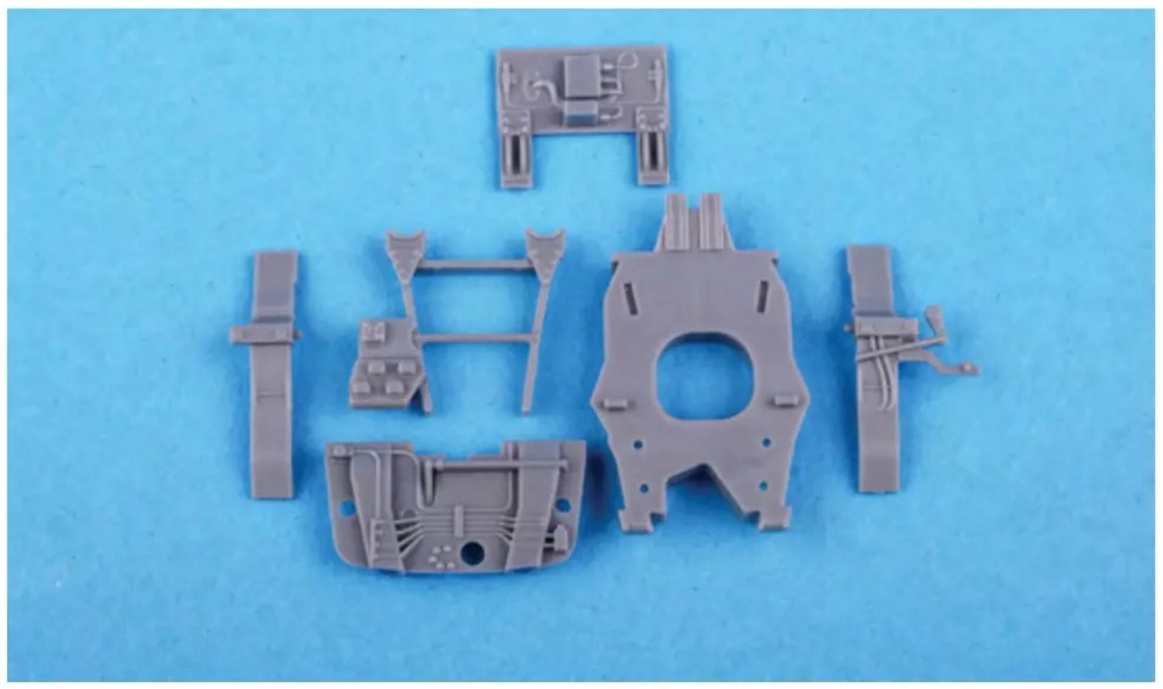


▲ Modellers can choose whether the lower cowling panel is open/closed. Regardless which is selected, the detail is excellent and the directional arrows plus front/rear annotations ensure proper alignment.



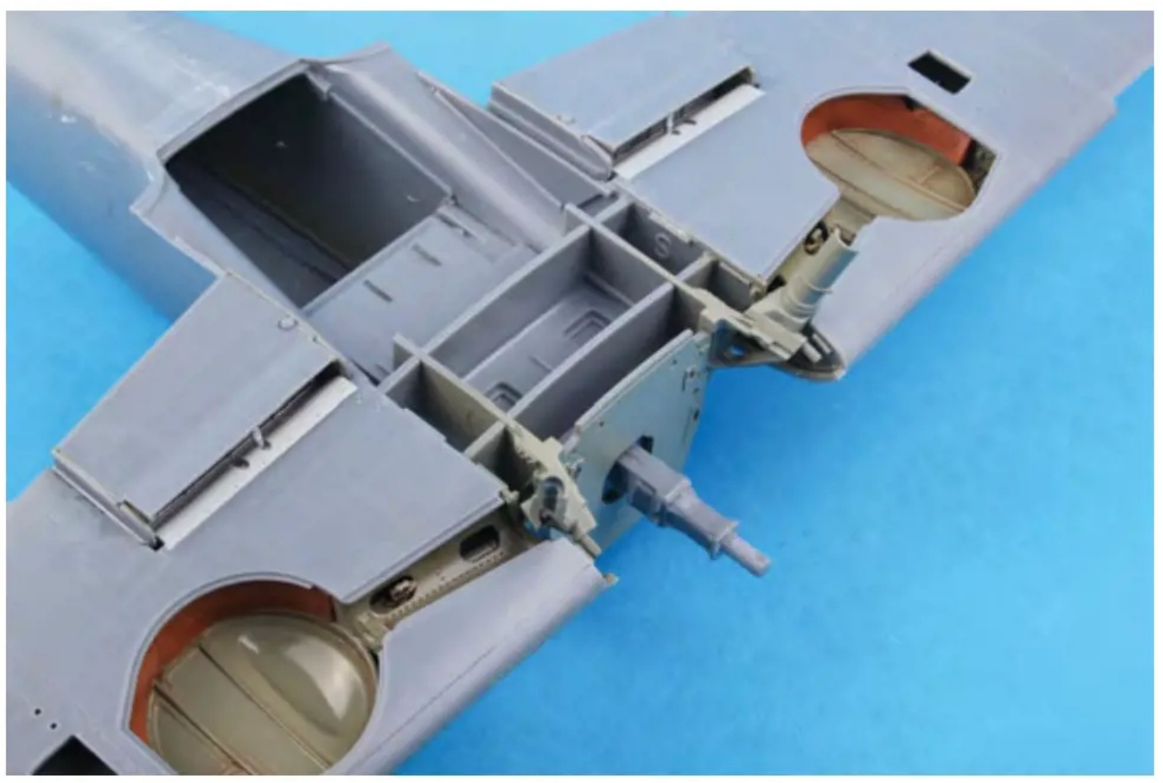


▲ Once assembled, the cowling received an undercoat/primer of X-17 Pink, as this shade is ideal for the subsequent yellow, with H314 RLM 04 Yellow preferred.

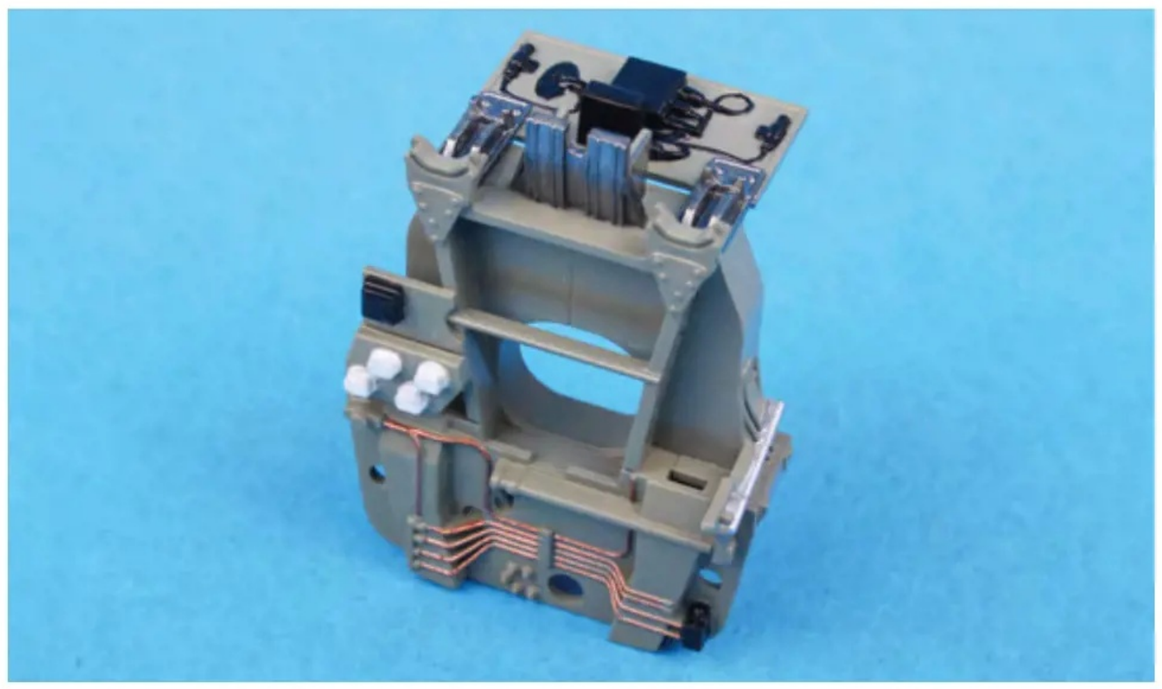


▲ The type's fuselage-mounted machine guns have their own mounting and ammunition stowage, comprising five pieces. This unit fits between the engine and cockpit bulkhead.

▲ Both wing radiators received Aluminium on the grilles, with depth created using a black oil wash.



▲ Airfix's approach to the undercarriage was for split mainwheel legs moulded integrally with bulkhead components. In hindsight, it would probably have been easier to add the rest of the legs at this stage.



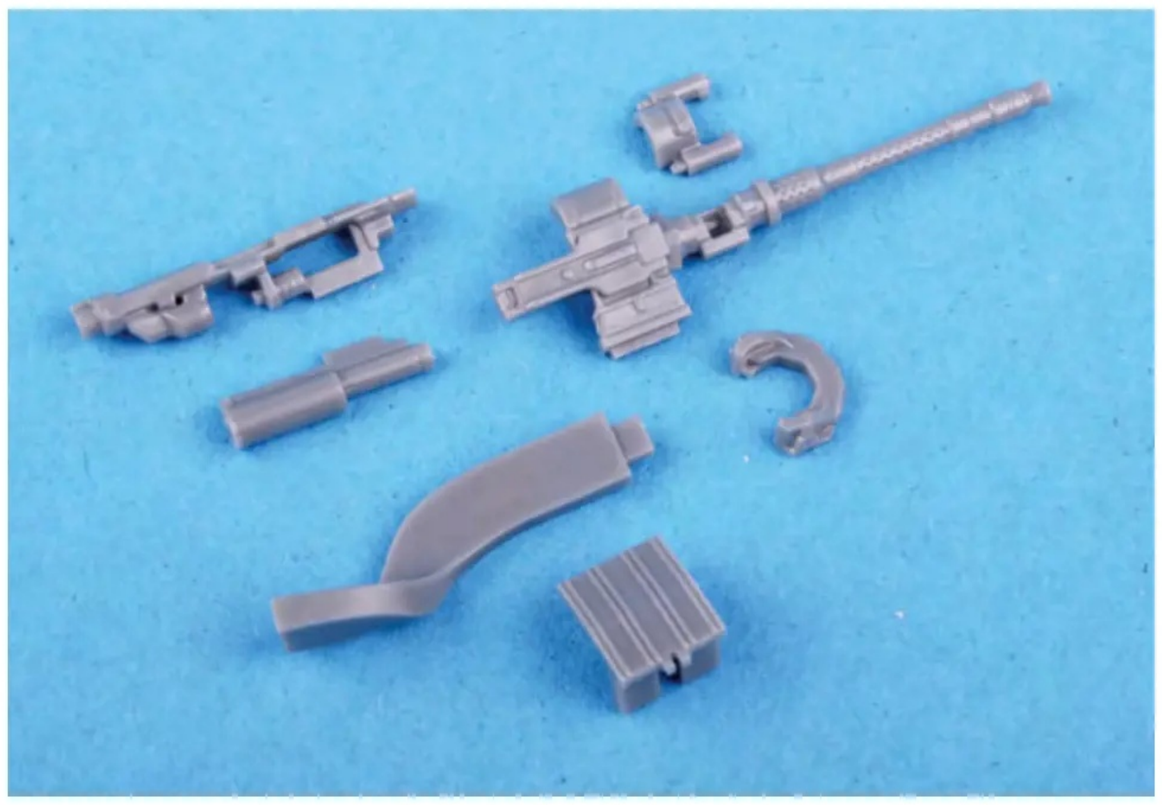
▲ While painting the RLM 02 base colour was straightforward, the detail work took much longer, with care needed where cables were moulded 'solid' around corners.

were then mixed to create subtle tonal variations, after which the process was repeated with PL187 Dunkelgrau RLM 74.

Random patches

Once satisfied with the main camouflage, it was back to RLM 75 to begin the mottle, this time diluted with approximately 10-20% SMS thinner and the pressure reduced on the compressor. With a test-card to one side (handy when the paint seemed to stop flowing, as it could be sprayed without risk of affecting the model's camouflage), the individual patches and larger areas of mottle were airbrushed. Airfix's colour guide was a constant reference, and the tonal depth was built gradually, more from a fear of excessive overspray than anything else.

That said, my first attempt at mottle was quickly abandoned – there's a balance to be struck between the fineness of mottle marks and paint density, and let's just say I missed this completely. The paint was left to dry, then sanded with a fine abrasive pad, after which the RLM 76 was re-applied, followed by RML 75 once more. Next came RLM 74, after which the model was set aside for several hours before



▲ The Bf 109 also had a pair of machine guns mounted above it. Airfix's six-piece units (the lower item is the top of the ammunition box) are well detailed, but benefit from having the muzzle opened.

REFERENCES:

There are a huge number of references on the Bf 109, but it struck me that there appears to be no single definitive publication on the type, which is somewhat surprising. The following were used for this project:

- *Airframe & Miniature No 11 Second Edition: The Messerschmitt Bf 109 – Late Series* (F to K including the Z Series) by Richard A Franks (Valiant Wings); ISBN: 978-1-912932-26-9
- *Messerschmitt Bf 109G/K Augsburg Eagle* by Model Art (Model Art); ISBN: N/A
- *Messerschmitt Bf 109 Recognition Manual: A Guide to Variants, Weapons and Equipment* by Marco Fernandez-Sommerau (Classic); ISBN: 978-1-903223-27-7
- *Aircraft No 57: Messerschmitt Bf 109 in Action, Part 2* by John R Beaman Jr (Squadron/Signal); ISBN: 978-0-89747-138-1
- *Messerschmitt Bf 109 F/G/K Series: An Illustrated Study* by Jochen Prien and Peter Rodeike (Schiffer); ISBN: 978-0-88740-424-5

“Without further ado, the white theatre band was airbrushed freehand”

being checked for any overspray, which was tackled by using the three camouflage colours as required until the desired results were reached.

Twenty-four hours later, it would be the turn of the rest of the model to undergo this process, with the one addition being a Blu Tack ‘worm’ to set the wavy demarcation along the wing leading edge (which would retain its RLM 76 colour). I may have grown more confident with my ability to freehand German camouflage, but not to the point where I was ready to tackle a three-colour junction!

As expected, the wings took the longest to complete, due to the tight zig-zags between colours, but eventually I set down the airbrush with a feeling of satisfaction. It wasn’t the *exact* camouflage pattern, but as close as I could manage. The mottld appeared slightly too heavy in places, but hopefully its appearance would be muted once the decals were applied.

Spinner stripe

Spiralschnauze… bless you! These spiralling stripes on a propeller spinner can be the bane of any modeller, regardless of how long you’ve been in the hobby. Two of the ‘109’s schemes featured such markings, including the box-top option, which was my intended subject. Fortunately, Airfix supplies a pre-cut, self-adhesive mask for each. A suggested in the instructions, leave the propellers off if you’re adding the stripe (they get in the way of the mask) and, once you’re happy with the joins, it’s time to paint.

The lighter colour – in this case white – was applied first, then set aside for two days to ensure it had dried properly and wouldn’t be marked by the tape. The mask was then applied (it took four attempts before the

▲ After sliding the completed machine gun mount/ammunition unit over the centrally mounted cannon stub, the completed engine could be added to the fuselage. It’s only at this stage that any alignment issues will be highlighted, but none were noted here.

▲ Adding yet more to the complexity, the machine gun’s spent case chutes are added, along with the remaining fuselage panels, which feature part of the bump covering the former.

“The runners – of which there are 17, including a frame for the clear parts – are organised in a way that many are ‘themed’”

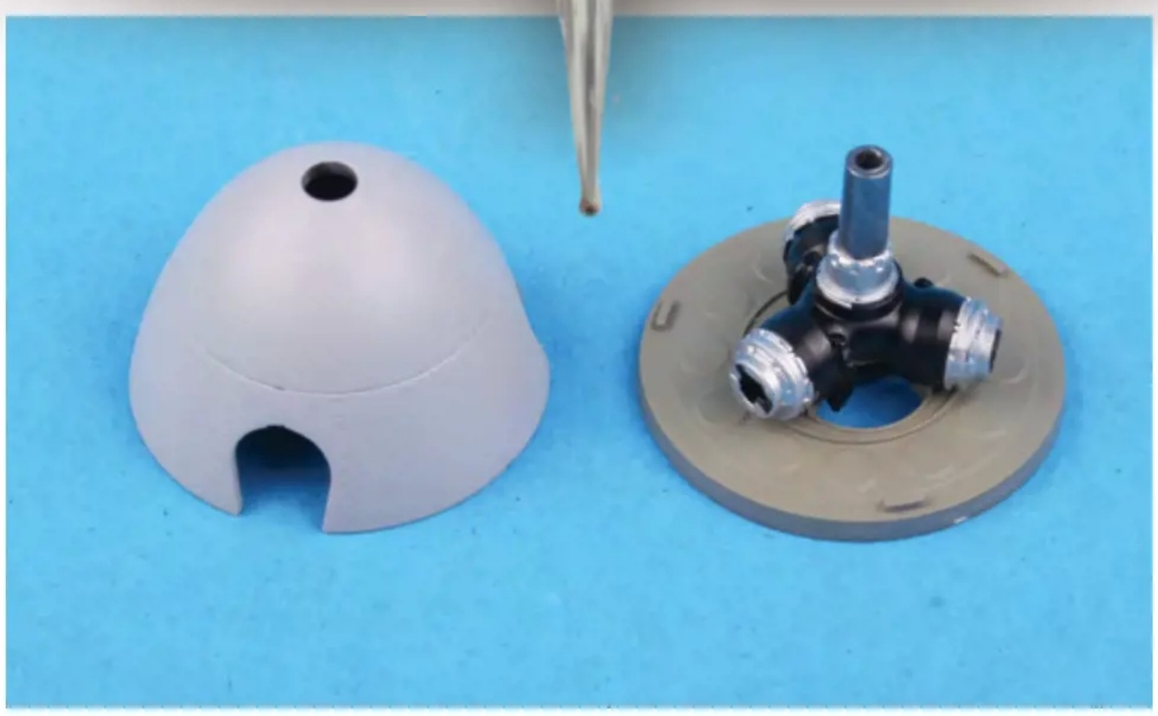
correct shape and gap widths were achieved), being burnished onto the spinner, after which the spinner received satin black. A top tip here: if you measure the distance between the spirals, aim for approximately 4mm, that way you will find the mask tape runs out just as you reach the spinner base.

Once dry, the mask was removed and any paint bleeds were neatened – typically they were in the most awkward places, notably around the cannon muzzle – followed by attachment of the propellers, which had previously been sprayed RLM 70.

Yellow 14

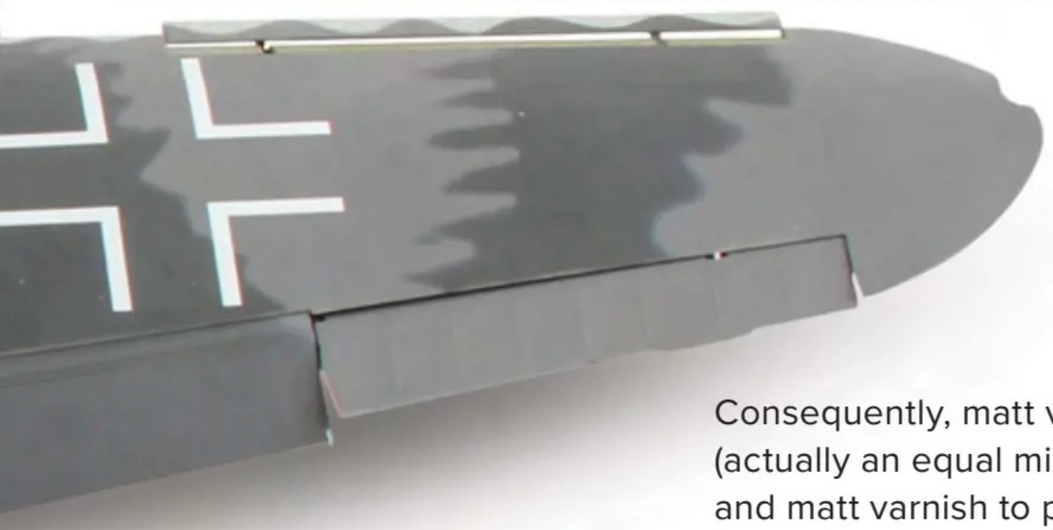
While several of the markings options appealed initially, I eventually settled on the box-top version, mainly due to the inclusion of the underwing gondolas and *that* spiralschnauze. Gloss varnish sealed the paintwork and created a suitably smooth surface for decaling. Despite my earlier concerns when building the cockpit, no problems were encountered when applying the markings, so this stage proceeded smoothly, with Microscale’s Micro Sol employed to bed them firmly into the moulded rivet and fastener detail. While it’s often said that adding the markings transform a model, it was particularly the case here. With the fuselage balkenkreuze and bright Yellow 14 items

▲ Airfix supplies a detailed propeller unit, although this will be hidden if the spinner is closed over it. If using the Spiralschnauze stripe, the blades should be left off until later.



▲ Although little of the propeller hub will be visible, it was sprayed black, before brush-painting the aluminium and gunmetal areas. The spinner assembled easily.

◀ **Stripe time! Airfix supplies a mask for the spiralschnauze, which is designed to cover the stripe itself, so the base colour must be white. It took several attempts before the proper alignment was achieved, after which the black was airbrushed.**



added, they provided a suitable level of obscuration for the mottle, making the model look closer to reference photos... previously I'd been concerned I had rendered the mottled areas too heavily.

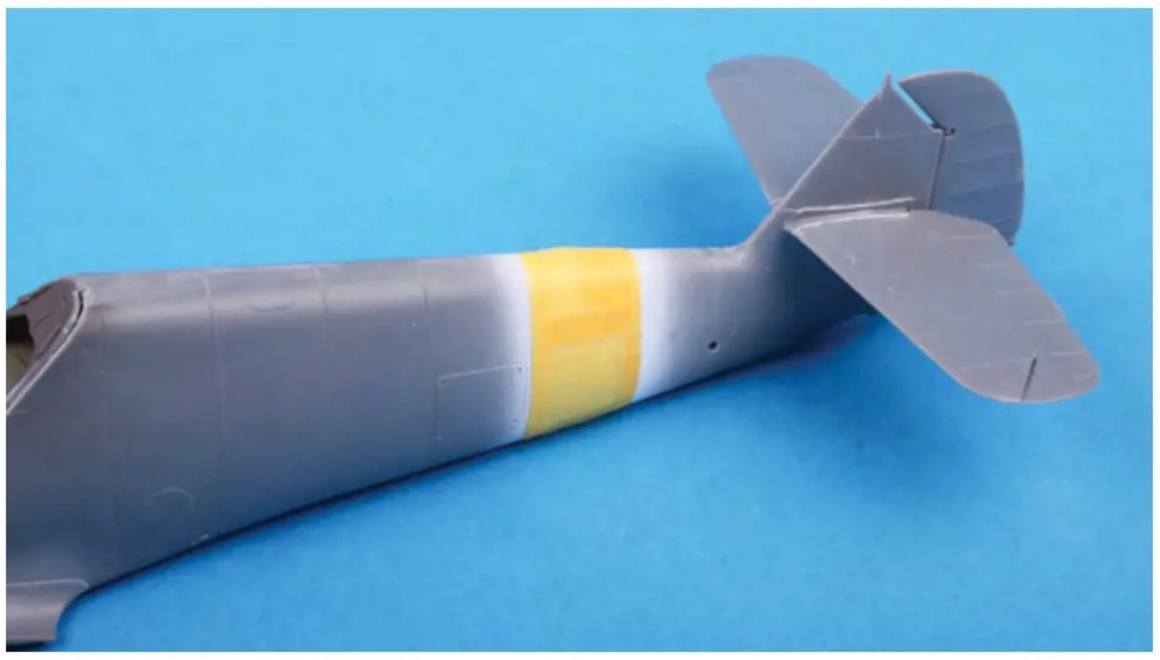
Given the lack of Swastikas in the kit, items from Xtradecal were sourced (X32-002) and the correct 1/24 300mm-sized items selected. Again, adding these was issue-free and, once all items had dried, the model was wiped with a damp kitchen paper to remove any excess decaling solution in readiness for varnish.

At this stage, it was decided not to opt for an oil wash to accentuate the detail, as the moulded features seemed to be suitably distinct on their own.

Consequently, matt varnish (actually an equal mix of satin and matt varnish to produce more of an 'eggshell' sheen) was duly airbrushed over the model and still-to-be-attached sub-assemblies. Final construction proceeded smoothly, with the only problems encountered being initially weak joins as I'd not cleaned the mating surfaces properly before adding glue. With the last piece attached – the broken antenna mast (don't ask!) – this marathon large-scale Messerschmitt was complete.

Top-notch Gustav

Airfix had much to live up to with its 1/24 Messerschmitt Bf 109G-5/G-6 and it has more than delivered, but be prepared for plenty of fine detail painting on the engine and cockpit. The manner in which components – even if added at widely differing stages – simply clicked into place or aligned perfectly makes this ▶



▲ **Painting started with the theatre fuselage band. Once this had dried, it was masked in readiness for the main airframe colours. The tail section would be tackled first.**

▲ **Inserts are supplied for each propeller blade – these mitigate against the risk of sink marks at the base of each blade, and required minimal filling and/or sanding.**

▲ **Here, an initial attempt at mottle has been partially replaced, while the rest of the airframe has received its RLM 76 colour. Masks around the engine were changed depending on which colour was being added.**

MATERIALS AT A GLANCE:

Abteilung502 (www.ak-interactive.com)
ABT060 Light Rust Brown
ABT510 Starship Filth

Alclad (www.alclad2.com)
ALC-101 Aluminium
ALC-106 White Aluminium
ALC-117 Dull Aluminium

AMMO (www.mig-jimenez.com)
A.MIG-2320 Burnt Iron
A.MIG-2350 Grey Primer & Microfiller

Daler-Rowney (https://daler-rowney.com)
Raw Sienna
Burnt Umber
White Spirit
Lamp Black

Deluxe Materials (https://deluxematerials.co.uk)
BD67 Looks Like Glass

Humbrol (https://uk.humbrol.com)
12 Copper
85 Coal Black
33 Matt Black
55 Bronze
25 Matt Blue
110 Wood

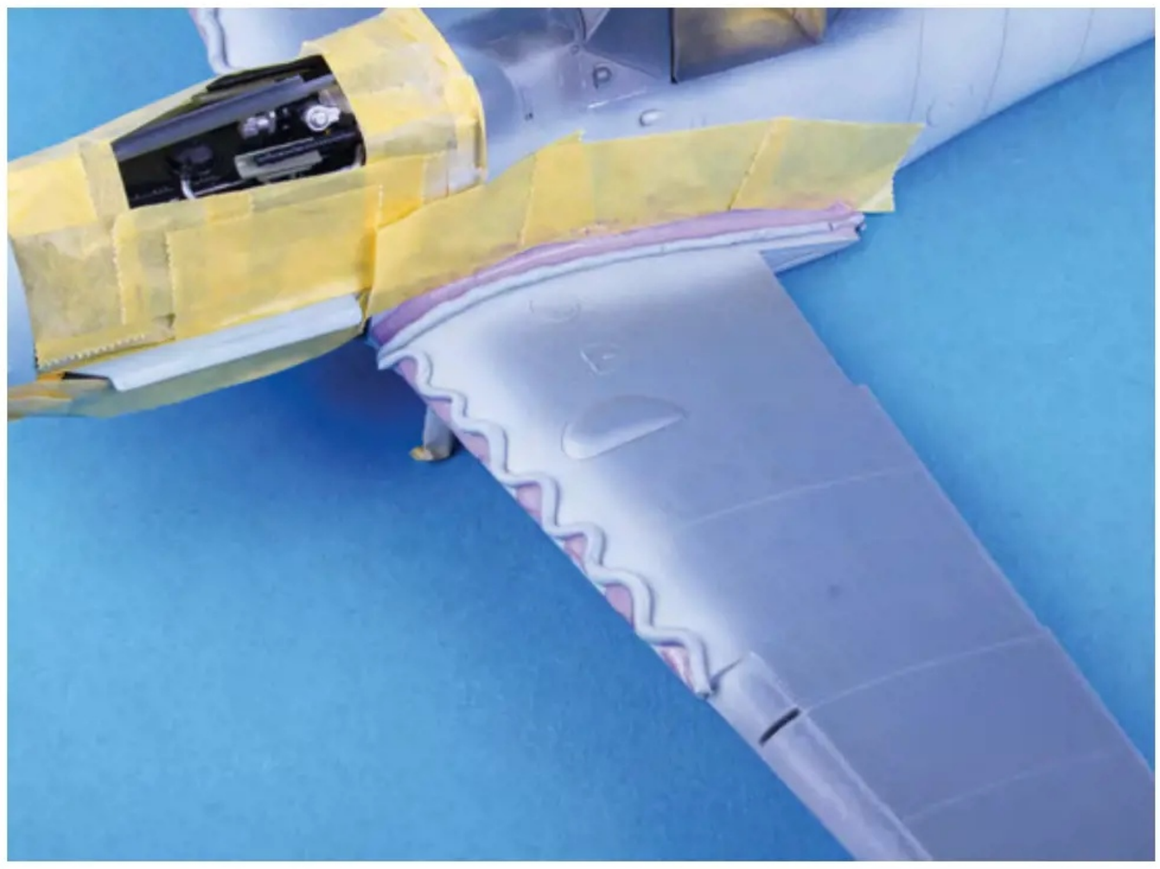
Mr. Color/Hobby (www.albionhobbies.com)
H414 RLM 23 Red
H413 RLM 04 Yellow
C116 RLM 66 Black Gray
C60 RLM 02 Gray
C351 Zinc-Chromate Type I

Modellers United (www.albionhobbies.com)
Aqua Gloss

SMS (www.albionhobbies.com)
PL189 RLM 76 Lichtblau
PMT04 Super Silver
PMT05 Stainless Steel
PL185 Schwartzgrun RLM 70
PL188 Grauviolett RLM 75
PL187 Dunkelgrau RLM 74

Tamiya (www.hobbyco.net)
LP-3 Flat Black
LP-4 Flat White
LP-5 Semi Gloss Black
LP-19 Gun Metal
X-17 Pink
X-33 Bronze
XF-57 Buff
XF-64 Red Brown
XF-85 Rubber Black

Vallejo (www.creativemodels.co.uk)
71.065 Steel
71.063 RLM 01 Silber
71.039 Hull Red
71.092 Medium Olive
71.064 Chrome
71.072 Gun



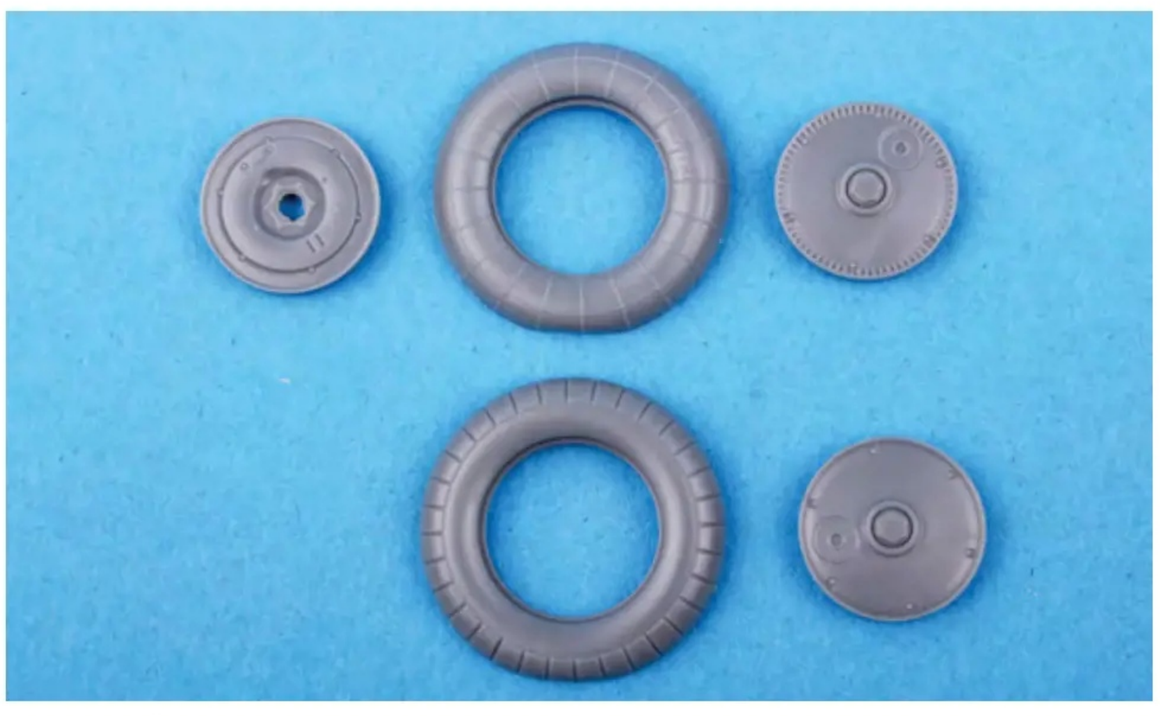
▲ The wavy leading-edge and almost-straight wingroot demarcations were set with Blue Tack worms, while the RLM 76 areas were protected using Maskol.

“Despite its complexity, the engine came together without much trouble”

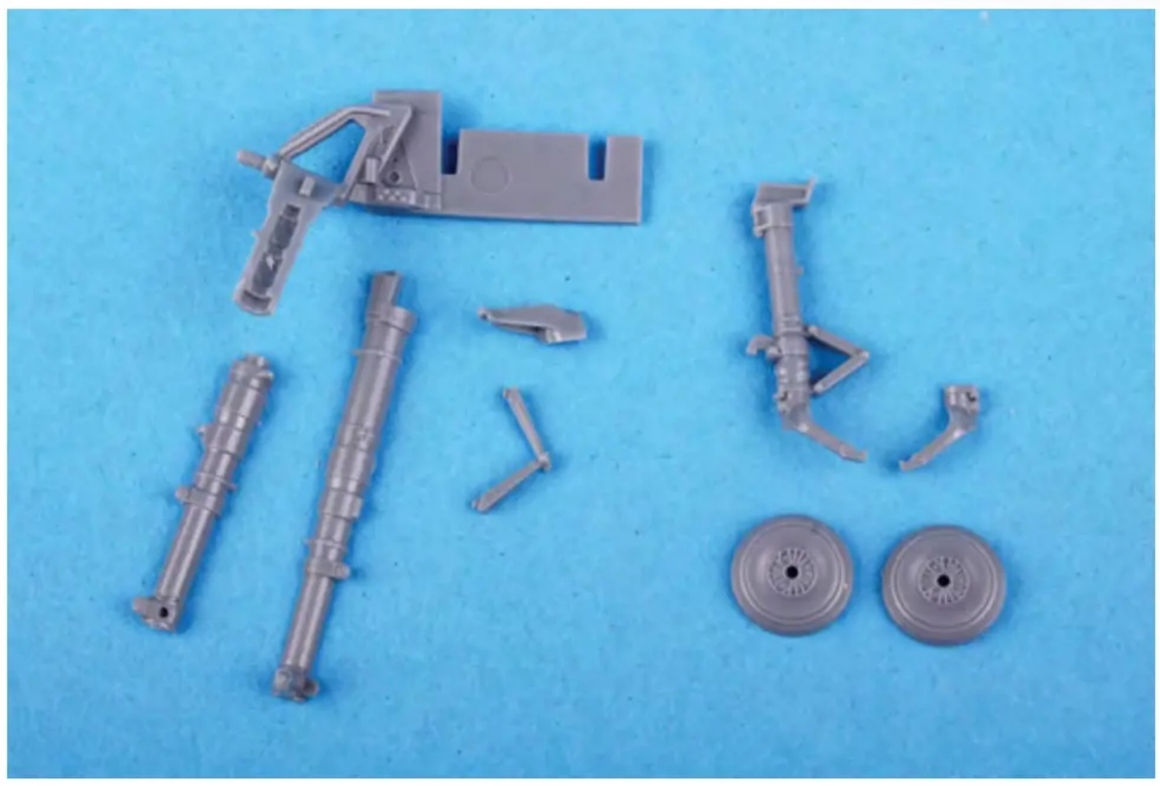
▲ Although it’s usually best to work from light to dark colours, the RLM 74 shade was applied first, as this was the colour abutting the wingroot demarcation. The mottles and wing patterns were airbrushed freehand.

▲ With the addition of the RLM 75, the scheme was completed – the rough zig-zag wing camouflage established by the RLM 74 was also neatened and refined.

▲ Any possible doubts regarding the mottles were dispelled after the decals were added, as this allowed the airframe to be seen in its final form for the first time.



▲ Two styles of mainwheel are included, with the upper version used here. Note the keyed axle opening – it’s well worth double-checking the alignment to make sure the flattened tyre section rests on the ground.



▲ Airfix has supplied the main undercarriage legs in split form. While this provides a very robust linkage with the fuselage, it means the leg itself may be weaker than a one-piece version.

▲ The 20mm 'gondolas' were among the last items to be built and painted. The parts are the same regardless of whether an open or closed pod is used, it's just a matter of removing an attachment stub for the former.

kit ideal for those modellers with perhaps several intermediate-level builds under their belt. The detail level arguably makes this a rare kit – an example that doesn't need much (if anything) in the way of aftermarket extras – and with Airfix releasing a double-sided masking set (A65009) even that aspect is covered.

On the downside, the ejector-pin release marks on the engine cowling and radiator flap inner faces were a mild nuisance, but if these parts are fitted closed it's not a problem. The 'family' of schemes depicting Yellow 14 adds further interest for modellers, allowing this captured machine to be portrayed at three distinct periods of its operational history. When you add the pre-cut masking set, options for late/early G-6 airframes and myriad choices regarding open/closed panels, raised/lowered control surfaces and flaps – all for the current price of some modern 1/48 kits – then Airfix's big Bf 109G-5/G-6 is sure to be a winner. AMW

▲ With matt varnish applied, most of the masking removed and all sub-assemblies finished, the Bf 109 was almost complete.

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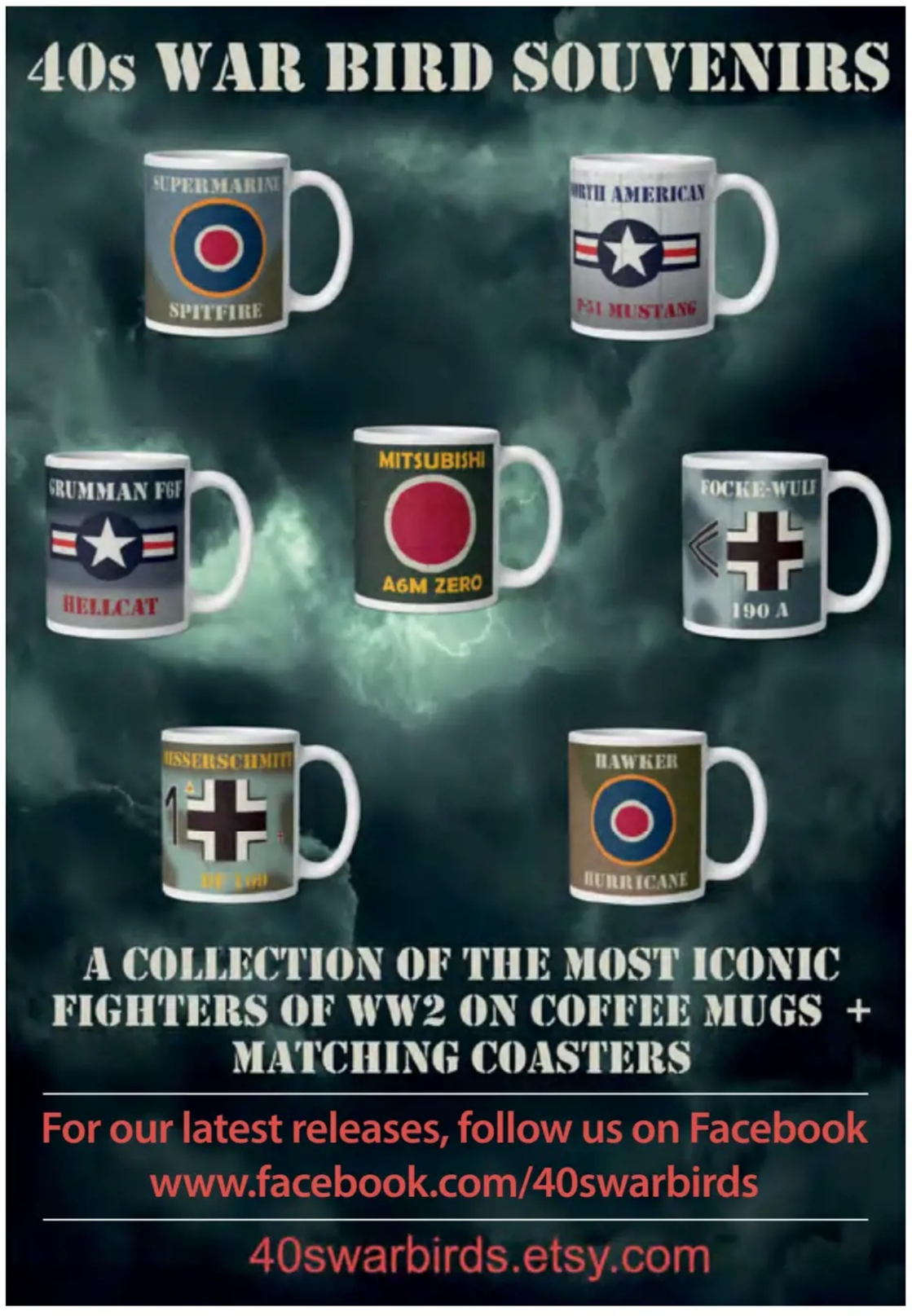
40s WAR BIRD SOUVENIRS



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1038/25

BACK TO BASICS

ALL STUCK UP

This month, we focus on the different types of adhesives available to modellers and which materials they are best suited for

If you walk into a model shop, the array of adhesives (if you're not relying on pre-packaged glue in a Starter/Gift Set) can be somewhat daunting, with different types, thicknesses and even colours. It's a far cry from past decades, where essentially you had a choice between perhaps two or three brands of tube glue, plus wood glue (which dries clear) for canopies, while the – at the time – exotic superglue was just for advanced modellers.

What we'll do here is again provide an overview of what's available. For peace of mind, the glue you get in Starter/Gift Sets is more than adequate for most purposes to begin with, although remember to keep the tube glue nozzle clear of any residue, otherwise it will clog.

Sticky starters

Modelling adhesives are essentially categorised into three types, what we'll label as 'mortar', 'melt' and 'UV-actuated'. The first acts just like the mortar between bricks, in that it's a layer between the parts and provides the actual bond – PVA Glue (also known as wood glue) and cyanoacrylate (CA; the technical name for all superglues) are examples. The second type is designed to partially melt the upper layer of styrene to create the bond – most, if not all, modern polystyrene glues fall into this group, even if they are labelled 'cement'. They come in all shapes and sizes, but the most prevalent are supplied in glass/plastic bottles and, of course, the ubiquitous metal tube. Last, but by no means least, UV-activated adhesives are a recent addition to the modelling toolbox and, as the name suggests, remain 'wet' until exposed to an ultraviolet light source, at which point they dry almost immediately.

▲ Modern polystyrene cements are a far cry from the likes of Britfix, with none of the troublesome 'stringing', while providing a strong bond. Despite what it says on the label, these are solvent-based and will melt the upper layer of styrene.

▲ The most common modelling adhesive type, liquid glues are ideal for general styrene usage, but do not work with resin or PE parts. Note, if liquid glue gets on a canopy or other clear part, it will cause damage, as it melts the styrene to form a bond.

First glues

Most likely, the initial glue type you'll encounter (thanks to those Starter/Gift Sets) is polystyrene cement, although in function it's actually one of our 'melt' category. Generally it comes in two versions: a thicker mix in tubes and a thinner blend via a precision 'needle' applicator – both Revell and Humbrol products are readily available in most good hobby and craft stores.

Moving on a step, we come to the most common adhesives on the market: the 'liquid cements'. Most paint companies produce their own brands, with variations in thickness, drying time and strength. All rely on a solvent that melts the styrene surface and 'welds' the parts together, relying on the evaporation of volatile compounds to hasten the drying process, with the consequence that most have strong odours, so you should use them in a well-ventilated space. Recently, odour-free and low-odour versions have become available, but we haven't seen many examples to date. One big advantage with these items is they usually include a brush applicator; those with a finer brush offer greater control over exactly where the glue is applied.

There are two outliers to this type. The first is a strong version of liquid cement, with the most common brand labelled Plastic Weld; great care is needed with this as it can easily melt fine detail if applied too liberally. The second isn't actually marketed as an adhesive, but as an airbrush cleaner, but it has the same chemical formulation as Liquid Cement. With this, the bonus is that, for its size, it's much cheaper than an equivalent 'proper' glue. Notable examples include cleaners by Tamiya and Mr. Tool.

Specialised products

Whether it's a case of wanting a better way to attach clear parts without the risk of glue smears or if you're using materials such as photo-etched (PE) metal or resin (either conventionally cast or 3D-printed), then you'll need adhesives that are more specialised. The easiest to work with is wood glue, also known as Polyvinyl Acetate (PVA). This is a 'mortar', but isn't the strongest of adhesives, so with care you can remove a part without damage, clean away the dried glue and then attach it again. Best of all, it's water-soluble, so once the part attached to the model, any excess can be wiped away with a damp cotton bud or kitchen tissue... and it dries clear.

At the opposite end of the scale is CA, which is often used to attach resin and PE components to *anything*, it's that flexible (it can also be used to join styrene parts). Generally, the thicker the blend, the slower the drying, and 'accelerator' products are available for near-instant drying. It's best applied with a cocktail stick and we recommend that if you use CA, you also buy a de-bonder – not for the model but for your fingers, as this adhesive is highly effective at gluing fingers to parts, tools or other fingers (it's actually used to close incisions during surgery).

The last type we'll mention has the potential to supplant CA, plus you're less likely to end up with your fingers stuck together, and that's UV-activated adhesive. It's a two-part product: a gel-like adhesive, which can come with thin dispensers for intricate work, and a UV light source. The adhesive remains 'wet' until exposed to the light, which causes a photo-chemical reaction, curing rapidly to form a strong bond. It also has gap-filling properties and can be sanded to shape when dry. AMW

▲ Among the strongest types of liquid cement are those labelled as 'weld' products. These work just the same, but are more vigorous in their action and tend to emit stronger odours.

▲ This isn't a mistake! Some airbrush cleaners actually use the same (or almost identical) chemical formula as adhesives, but are generally cheaper to buy.

▲ UV-activated glues have the potential to become a more user-friendly alternative to CA, being generally odour-free and not setting/curing until exposed to UV light.

▲ Superglues are useful, if tricky to handle, products, being universal. They usually come in small bottles (not much is needed) and accelerators can expedite drying time... de-bonder is also recommended, to separate fingers!

GAP FILLERS

The next *Back to Basics* article – scheduled for the March 2026 issue – will focus on fillers.

Raptor Rapture

Prehistoric memories of Saturday afternoons spent building Airfix dinosaur kits were stirred for **Dave Oliver**, while building X-Plus's new *Jurassic World* Blue and Beta

I can vividly remember a trip to the Natural History Museum during the school holidays, culminating in the compulsory visit to the gift shop after taking in the wonders of the collection. Suitably inspired by what I saw, I purchased an Airfix Triceratops kit, spending the return train journey imagining the detailed prehistoric scene I would create, using my limited set of Humbrol enamels and even more limited modelling skills. Unfortunately, my grandiose vision for the project ran into two major problems; firstly being seven years old, patience was a rare commodity and secondly, the rather intricate construction, not helped by using Airfix tube-style Poly glue, meant it was left half-finished, on the 'shelf of shame'... a modelling evolutionary dead end.

"In the hands of engineers"

What seems like aeons later, the editor asked if I would be interested in trying Mesozoic modelling via the Blue and Beta kit by X-Plus, based on the velociraptors from the 2022 film *Jurassic World Dominion*. The box duly arrived, with a beautifully painted example of the model on the cover. Inside, five grey styrene runners, along with a diorama base, were all included, plus instructions.

Once construction got underway, removing the parts from the large runner attachment gates required the deft use of quality side cutters. Preserving the surface detail on the hide of the creatures demanded careful removal of any excess plastic. Some parts

▲ The design of the locating tabs on individual parts initially appeared somewhat confusing, but ensured the correct fit was achieved between different sub-assemblies.

MODEL SPEC

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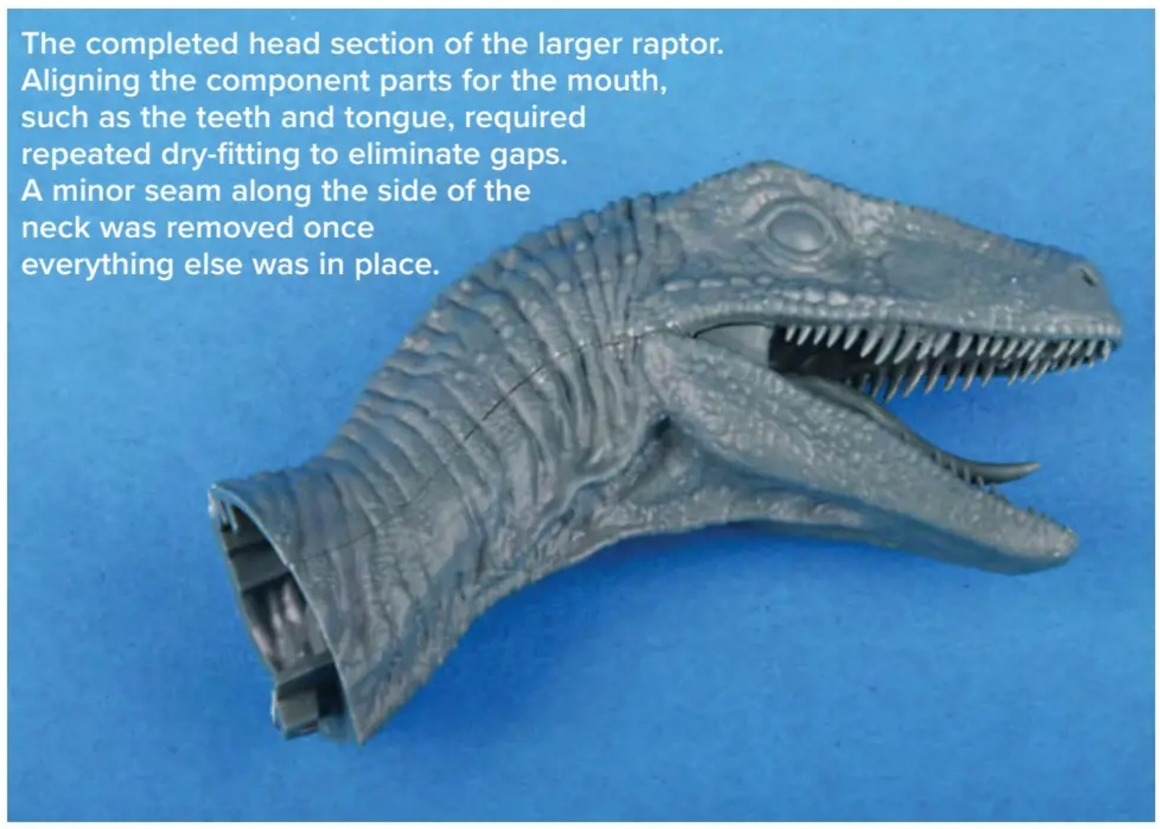
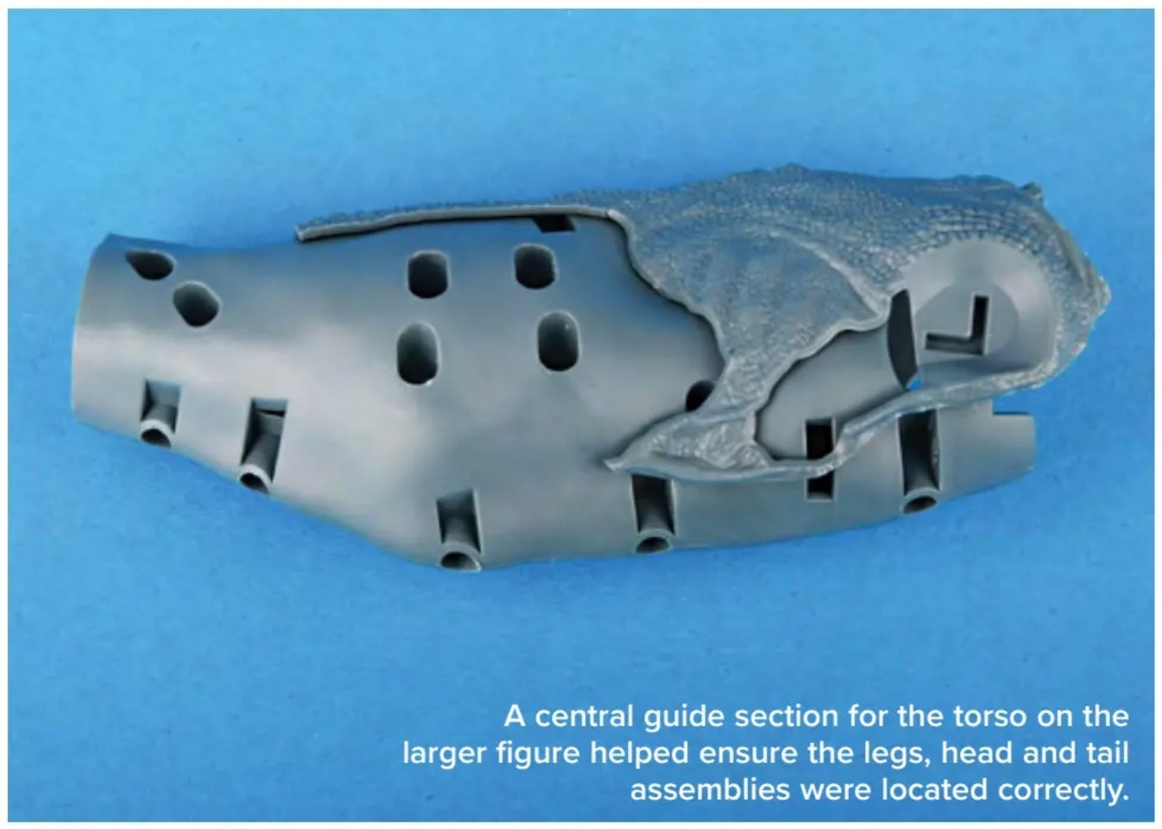


The completed head section of the larger raptor. Aligning the component parts for the mouth, such as the teeth and tongue, required repeated dry-fitting to eliminate gaps. A minor seam along the side of the neck was removed once everything else was in place.



A central guide section for the torso on the larger figure helped ensure the legs, head and tail assemblies were located correctly.

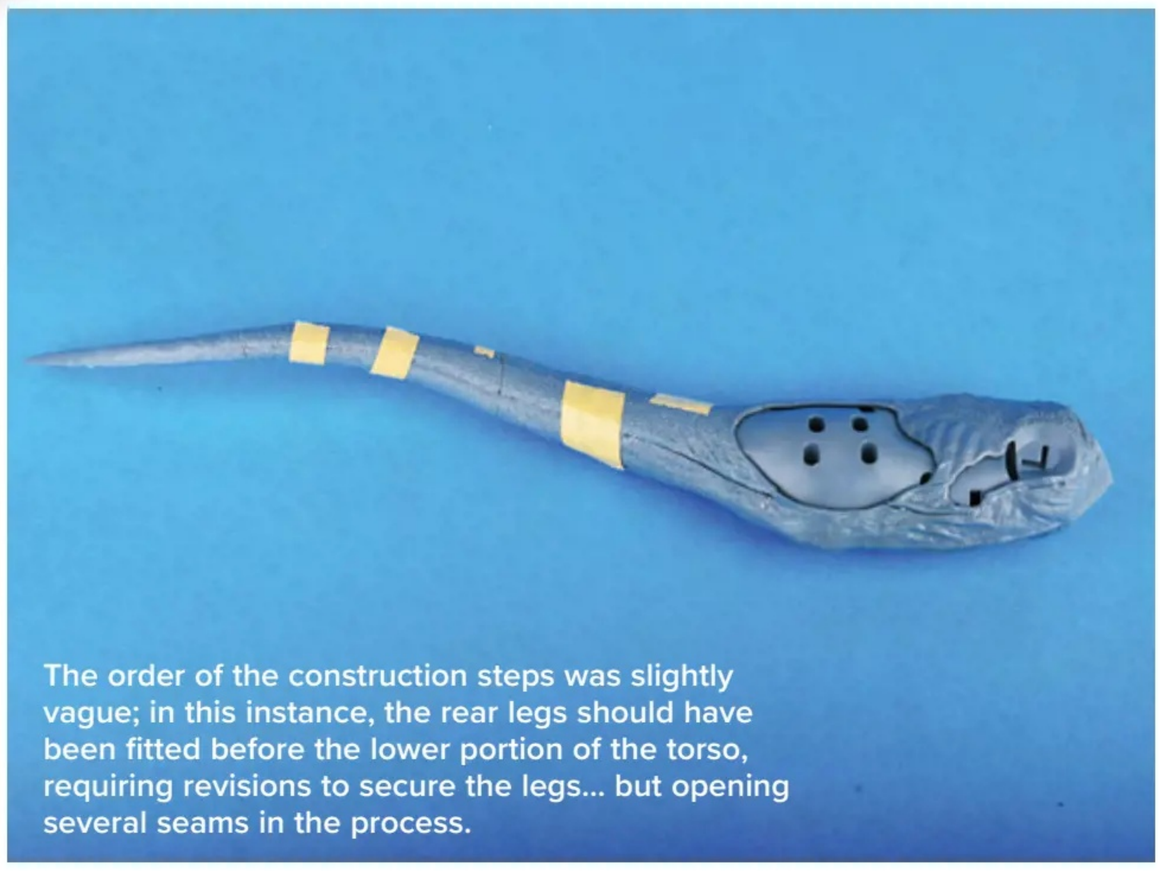
were removed with several millimetres of excess remaining; the remainder carefully being removed then neatened with a scalpel. The central endoskeleton, comprising two separate parts, formed the torso, over which the skin and other component parts would fit. The instructions gave an overall idea of the assembly order, but nevertheless, a novice may well find the lack of clear stages problematic – although more experienced modellers should encounter no major problems.

Following the suggested steps for construction, a small issue emerged when the rear legs of the larger animal were test-fitted with the body. The concave edge of the surrounding parts meant that the bevel on the leg section would not allow the sub-assembly to fit. 'Industrial' action ensued, with the parts on the torso having to be forced apart to accept the piece, opening rather unsightly seams in the process.

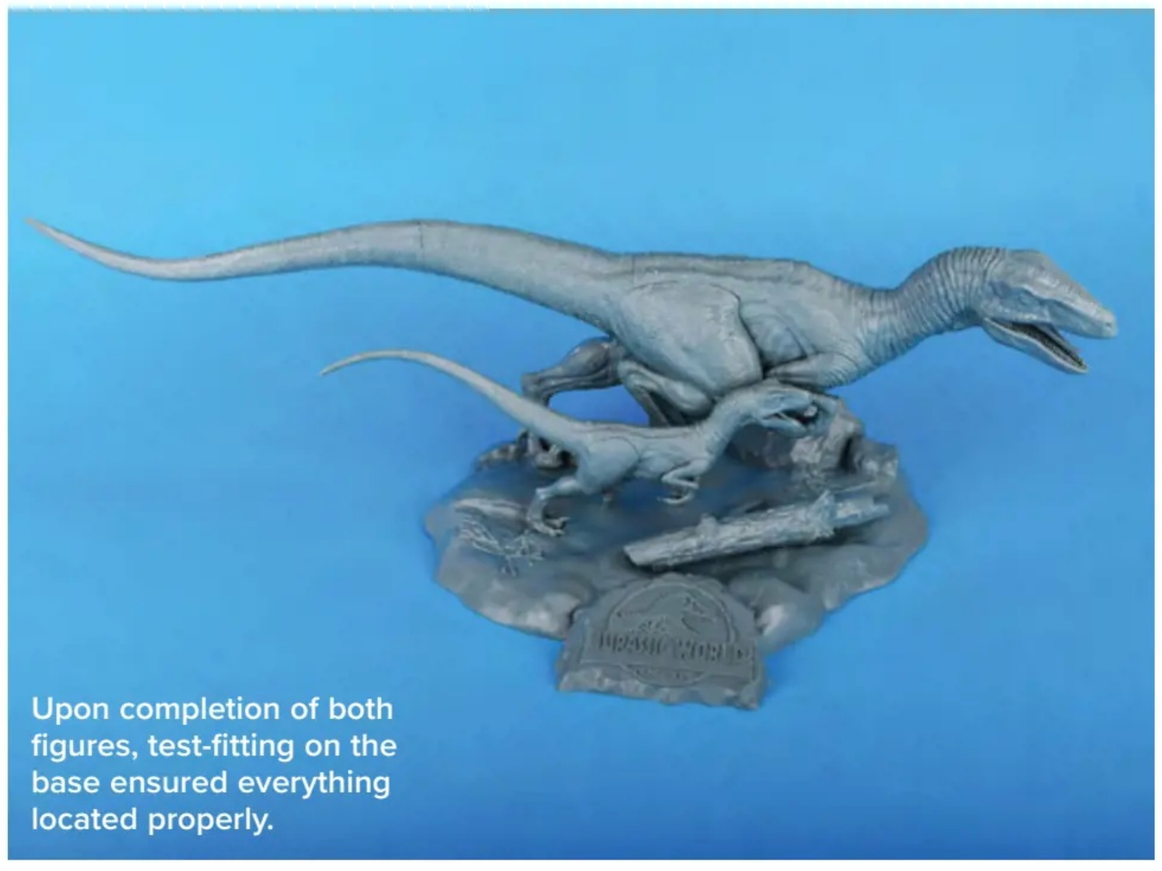
Thankfully, the rest of the construction proceeded smoothly, with just minor applications of Deluxe Materials' Perfect Plastic Putty filling any remaining gaps. Painting the prominent, official Jurassic Park logo, at the front of the vignette, took a little experimentation. Reproducing the diffused background colours on the piece required several applications of various paint shades via the airbrush. Vallejo 72.010 Bloody Red, sprayed on the periphery of the circle, was followed by another coat, lightened progressively with 72.036 Bronze Flesh Tone. Moving to the centre of the motif, 70.953 Flat Yellow and 70.919 Flat White were airbrushed sparingly to blend the different shades without overpowering the previous painting steps. Final highlights and shadows were created with the darker and lighter hues, before the lettering and distinctive Tyrannosaurus Rex graphic were brush painted with 70.950 Black, diluted minimally to ensure it did not run into the recesses of the piece.

Jurassic base

Painting and weathering the base created a welcome diversion from the rest of the build, being completed before the figures themselves. Having watched the Blue-Ray release of the film, it provided an idea of the winter habitat where the scenes with Blue and Beta took place. No definitive position was given for the tree trunk, so several locations were tried, before settling on the front right-hand side. Paint shades from LifeColor's CS20 Weathered Wood set helped create a gnarled appearance, with the contrast between the light and dark shades exaggerated to complement the snow effects. A diluted wash of Citadel Agrax Earthshade and a pin wash of AMMO Oilbrusher A.MIG-3505



The order of the construction steps was slightly vague; in this instance, the rear legs should have been fitted before the lower portion of the torso, requiring revisions to secure the legs... but opening several seams in the process.



Upon completion of both figures, test-fitting on the base ensured everything located properly.

Olive Green added an earthy element to the timber.

Rocks at the back of the scene were dry-brushed with successively lighter shades of grey, from the 70.151 Black and White paint set, allowing the black primer coat to show through and creating deep shadows in the surface. Although the earth effects were covered by snow, time was taken to dry-brush suitably muddy shades on the surface detail. To add texture to the groundwork, 73.826 Mud and Grass effects were blended into the surface with a modelling tool, concentrating on the recessed areas such as the dinosaur footprints, to create the appearance of recently churned mud.

KIT EVOLUTION

Assembly of both figures was relatively straightforward, with the well-planned – if somewhat convoluted – construction ensuring any revisions were minimal.

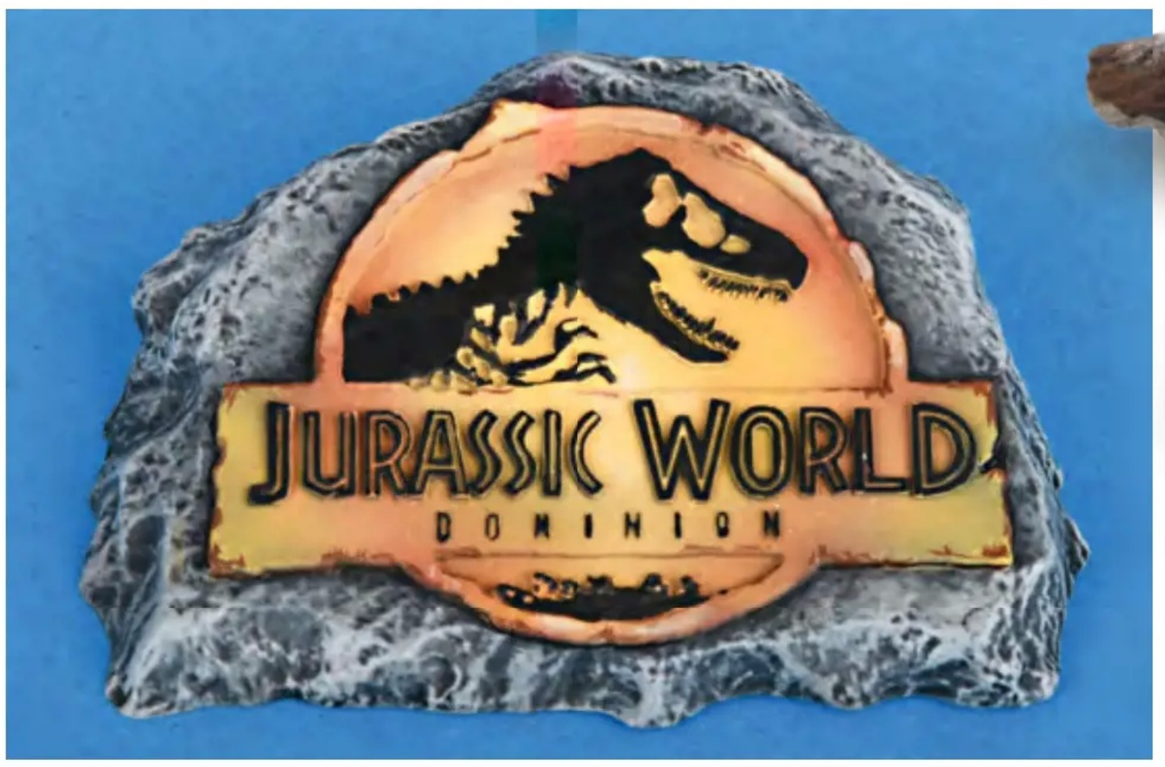
▲ The clever design of both raptors concealed several conspicuous joins on the underside parts, with just minor imperfections needing to be rectified.

▲ Fit issues on the smaller raptor, around the tail and the neck, were present – despite care being taken to ensure the best possible alignment.

▲ Deft applications of Deluxe Materials Perfect Plastic Putty soon resolved any remaining surface imperfections.

Snow day

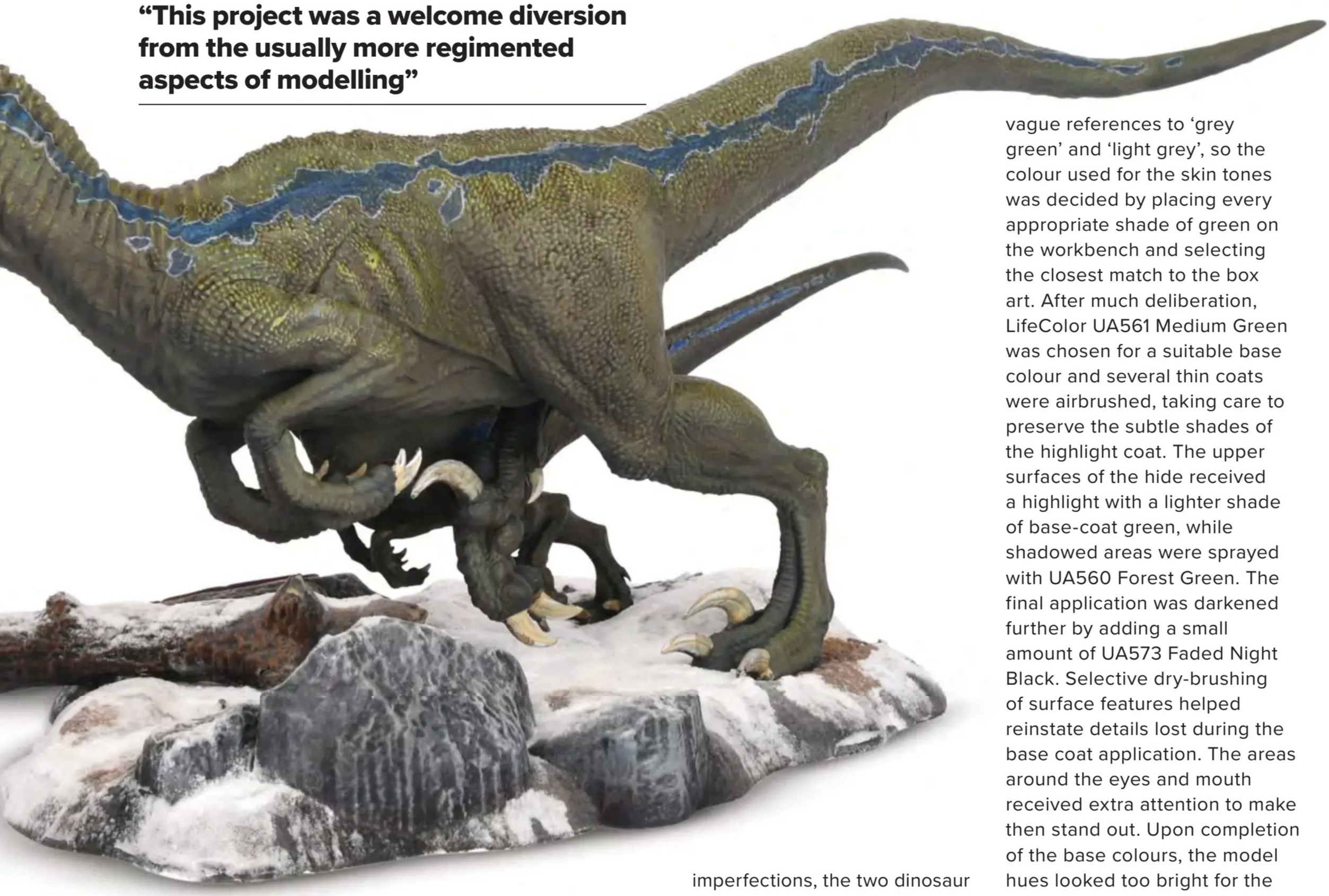
Replicating the frosty background of the film was a little challenging. Snow effects can be a hit-and-miss affair, with little recourse to starting over if the appearance is unsatisfactory. Much like the real thing, by building layers of snow, a degree of control can be exercised over where the covering will be thickest and where just a light dusting, such as on the rocks, would be present. To begin, a fine sprinkling of AK Interactive AK-8010 Snow Micro Balloons, applied at 90° to the surface, created the first layer to giving a subtle frost patina. This was kept in place with AK-118 Sand and Gravel fixer, placed sparingly on the surface via a pipette. Subsequent thicker



▲ Creating the iconic logo took some experimentation. Increasingly lighter tones, from red to bright yellow, were airbrushed from the edge of the design to the centre. The silhouette and lettering were reinstated with Vallejo Black and a fine brush.

▲ Application of the snow effects was a messy affair. AK Interactive Gravel and Sand fixer was liberally applied to the surface, before an overall coating of Snow Micro Balloons and more selective sprinklings of Ice Sparkles were added.

"This project was a welcome diversion from the usually more regimented aspects of modelling"



applications in selected ground recesses followed the same process – Citadel Agrax Earth Shade Gloss wash being worked into the snow with an old brush, to break up the uniformity of the effect. A final addition was AK-8037 Ice Sparkles to add different textures to the scene, with the tree branch and rocks receiving extra treatments.

Prehistoric Painting

After a final round of filling and neatening of any surface imperfections, the two dinosaur figures were primmed with Citadel Chaos Black, then airbrushed with several different grey shades to provide a zenithal highlight, accenting areas of light and shadow and exposing details such as the eyes and teeth.

No specific paint brand was listed in the instructions, with vague references to 'grey green' and 'light grey', so the colour used for the skin tones was decided by placing every appropriate shade of green on the workbench and selecting the closest match to the box art. After much deliberation, LifeColor UA561 Medium Green was chosen for a suitable base colour and several thin coats were airbrushed, taking care to preserve the subtle shades of the highlight coat. The upper surfaces of the hide received a highlight with a lighter shade of base-coat green, while shadowed areas were sprayed with UA560 Forest Green. The final application was darkened further by adding a small amount of UA573 Faded Night Black. Selective dry-brushing of surface features helped reinstate details lost during the base coat application. The areas around the eyes and mouth received extra attention to make then stand out. Upon completion of the base colours, the model hues looked too bright for the subject matter, while several of the more intricate details had been obscured. After deliberation, a diluted wash of Citadel Agrax Earth, liberally applied with a flat brush, created the desired effect... muting the green shades and outlining the raised features.

▲ Creating an even primer coat of Chaos Black took several coats, sprayed at various angles. Several of the grey hues from the Vallejo Black and White paint set formed the initial pre-shade.

▲ Placing the figures on the base, between the painting stages, helped to ensure the colours used on Blue and Beta were consistent with both each other and the background.

PRIMORDIAL SWAMP

X-Plus's base provided the perfect grounding for the two velociraptors, the snowy landscape forming a stark contrast with the muted greens and blues of the dinosaurs' hides.

▲ The kit-supplied vignette appeared straightforward; each of the component parts offered their own challenges during painting and weathering.

▲ A primer of Citadel Black was sprayed in two misted coats. Each sub-assembly was primed separately before construction, to ensure all surfaces received an even coverage.

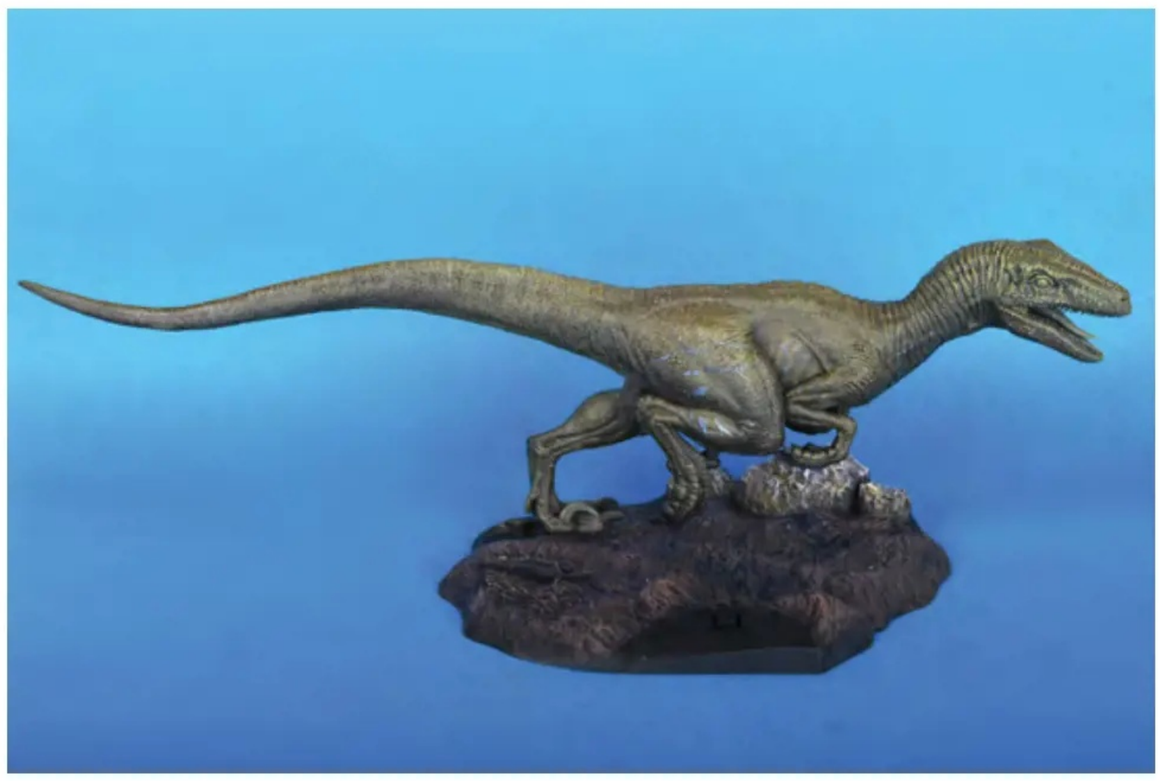
▲ Each element of the base required various painting techniques to achieve a suitable backdrop for the two raptors.

▲ The colour contrast of the rocks, mud and trees was exaggerated to complement the snow effects, these being applied once everything was secured to the base.

▲ **LifeColor UA561 Medium Green from the USAF Vietnam paint set was selected for the base coat, with other lighter and darker shades being airbrushed. Selective dry-brushing of the lightest shade helped accentuate more prominent details.**

Eye catching

Details such as the eyes and mouth were next on the list, with time being taken to ensure colours for the former were sufficiently vibrant to reflect the real anatomy. The periphery of the eye was painted 70.859 Black Red, followed by 72.010 Bloody Red and finally 70.953 Flat Yellow; the different shades wet-blended as the lighter tones reached the centre of the eye to create a diffused effect. Several revisions were made, with a remedial shade of heavily diluted, darkened Black Red being applied to the eye socket recesses, via capillary action, while the centre received a lightened application of Flat Yellow. The pupil was created with 70.950 Black, a small dot initially being placed in the middle of the eye, with subsequent strokes of the brush expanding the area, allowing the shape of the pupil to form gradually, creating a satisfactory shape. Final highlights of white around the periphery of the pupil, plus a trace of Flat Yellow, further enhanced the appearance, while a wash of Citadel Gloss Reikland



▲ A diluted wash of Citadel Agrax Earthshade wash helped add depth to the hide. Subsequent subtle dry-brushing of the base colour helped reinstate specific surface details.

▲ The distinctive blue stripes on the flanks of both Blue and Beta were painted with a fine brush, closely following the pattern displayed on the box illustration. A mixture of 70.930 Dark Blue and Citadel Lothern Blue, mixed in the wet palette, subtly complemented the base coat.

Fleshshade around the socket added the finishing touch.

Fossilised remains

Painting the mouth and teeth presented its own problems, with access to reach the recesses of the roof of the mouth and throat being compromised. In hindsight, maybe this area could have been painted before final construction, but a small brush and workbench contortions achieved even paint coverage. Vallejo Black Red provided a realistic base coat; the gums being painted with a lightened application of the same colour. Meanwhile, the prominent tongue received the Black Red base shade, wet blended with 70.911 Bright Orange to create contrast with the mouth. The teeth were painted last, via a base coat of Citadel Ushabti Bone, followed by highlights with 70.918 Ivory and 70.919 Cold White. A wash of Citadel Gryphon Sepia added a grubby patina to the base of the teeth, while an overall application of Citadel Gloss Reikland Fleshshade was applied to the recesses of the mouth.

End credits

This project was a welcome diversion from the usually more regimented aspects of modelling. Fictional themes such as this ▶

MATERIALS AT A GLANCE

AK Interactive (www.ak-interactive.com)
AK-118 Gravel and Sand Fixer
AK-8037 Ice Sparkles
AK-8010 Snow Micro Balloons

AMMO (www.migjimenez.com)
Oilbrusher A.MIG-3505 Olive Green

Citadel (https://citadelcolour.com)
Agrax Earthshade
Chaos Black
Gryphon Sepia
Lothern Blue
Reikland Fleshshade
Ushabti Bone

LifeColor (www.airbrushes.com)
LC-CS20 Weathered Wood paint set
LC-UA560 Forest Green
LC-UA561 Medium Green
LC-UA573 Faded Night Black

Vallejo (www.creativemodels.co.uk)
70.151 Black and White paint set
70.911 Bright Orange
70.918 Ivory
70.919 Cold White
70.950 Black
70.953 Flat Yellow
72.010 Bloody Red
72.036 Bronze Flesh Tone
73.826 Mud and Grass effects
70.930 Dark Blue

“No specific paint brand was listed in the instructions, with vague references to ‘grey green’ and ‘light grey’”

SKIN IN THE GAME

The instructions contained useful tips on how to complete the scene, from suggestions on how to achieve the snow effects, to painting the eyes – several unusual ideas being nominated.

▲ A novel approach to simulating peeling skin was suggested in the instructions. Liquid masking solution was scraped across the surface with a cocktail stick, across the upper legs and torso, before the base colour was applied.

▲ The effect appeared a little too stark, so the green base coat shade was repainted with a fine brush help to soften the effect.

▲ With both raptors attached to the base, along with the broken log, the *Jurassic World* logo was added temporarily to check fit before snow effects are added to the groundwork.

▲ Creating realistic eyes was a priority. Once again, the wet palette came into its own, with several red, orange and yellow hues prepared and then wet-blended, to naturally merge the different shades.

certainly require an awareness of the subject matter intricacies, but even the most ardent 'rivet counter' is unable to provide photographic evidence of the real thing. Although maybe not suitable for the novice (the kit carries a recommended age of 15), the minor issues with construction were no obstacle to creating such a dynamic scene. It's good to finally produce a dinosaur diorama in keeping with the ambitious vision I had as a seven-year-old.

AMW

"Removing the parts from the large runner attachment gates required the deft use of quality side cutters"

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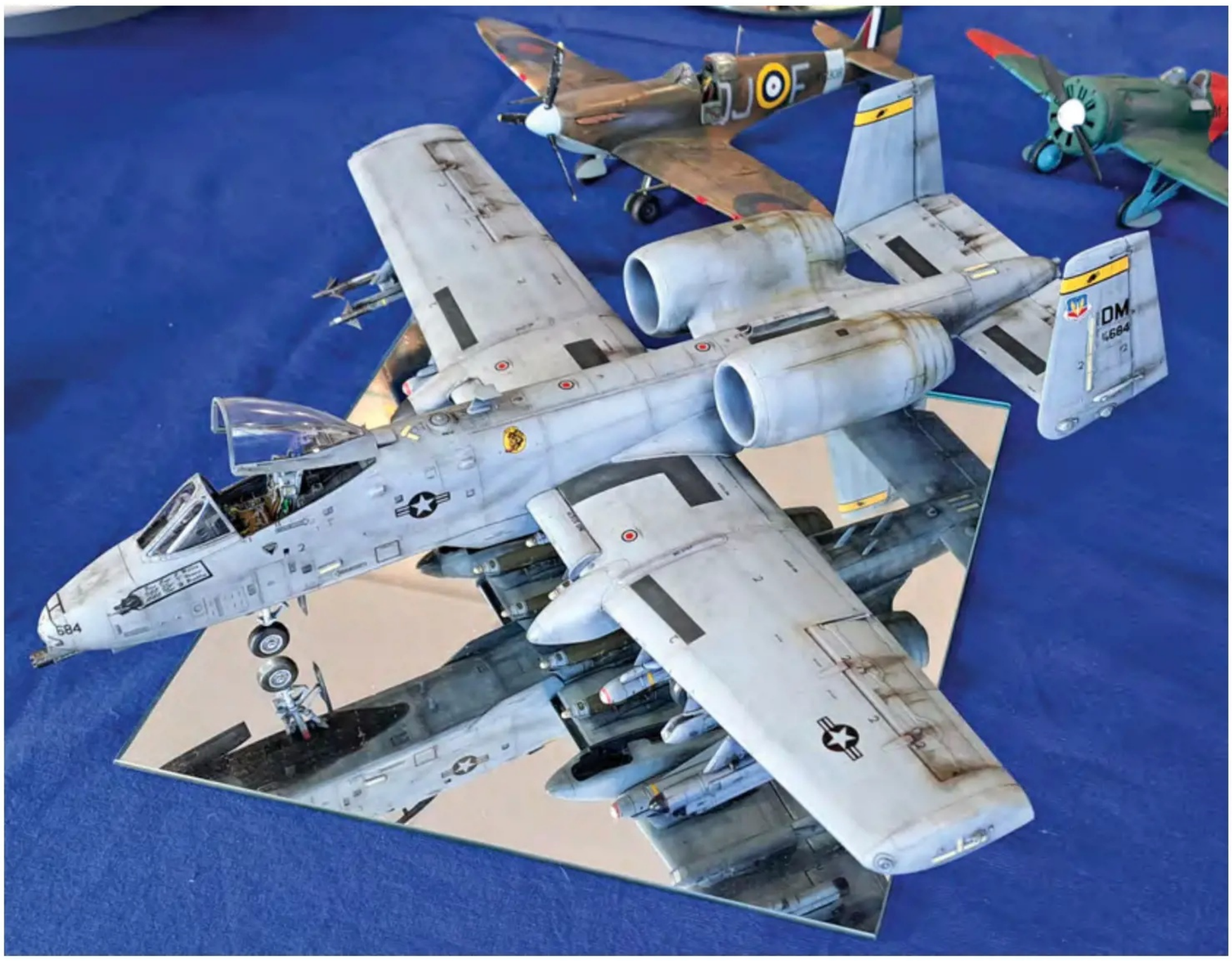
FENLAND GATHERING



◀ Among the varied builds on the Sheffield Model Group display was this superb Great Wall Hobby 1/48 A-10C by Nigel Wells. It was built straight from the box as a 354th Fighter Squadron 'Bulldogs' airframe, loaded with GBU-38 JDAMs and AGM-65 Mavericks

▲ Northants British Model Soldier Society member Terry O'Neil used a combination of oils and acrylics on his sumptuously detailed Pegaso 75mm Col 7th Hussars 1914 figure; note the convincing pattern on the numnah, replicating an animal hide.

▲ Mildenhall Scale Model Club's Rick Smith used the Adventures in Plastic 1/350 Thunderbird 2 to create this splendid seascape diorama of Thunderbird 4 being deployed from the former's equipment pod.

Paraphrasing a well-known children's song: "If you go down to the Fens in mid-September, you're sure of a big surprise," courtesy of the long-running and popular Wings & Things show, hosted as always by IPMS Fenland & Spalding. And what a feast greeted the eyes on entry, with a main hall packed with displays and stands, with something for everyone to enjoy, whether your interest lay in aircraft, armour, racing cars, sci-fi , fantasy, Gunpla or wargaming. Another element adding to the show's appeal is the warmth of the welcome, from both the hosts and the exhibitors, and there were numerous discussions regarding the models and dioramas on display. Such was the visitor appeal this year that the club's tombola was closed as all prizes had been won just a couple of hours after the doors had opened. And remember, look out for the show next year as that's the day the Fenland & Spalding modellers have their annual 'picnic'!

Stu Fone

▲ There were several stunning automotive builds on show, including this highly modified Tamiya 1/24 Porsche 956 Le Mans 1984 winner by Belvoir IPMS modeller John Cope; he scratch-built the entire interior and front section – to the extent you see more each time you look at it – before posing the racer in 'sectioned' form.

▲ This neatly painted Airfix 1/72 NHS Charities Hawk was the work of Norfolk Scale Model Group modeller Lorraine Grant.

▲ If you're looking for unusual or less well-known subjects, then the Between the Wars Special Interest Group is always worth checking. Mike Jerram finished his Huma Fieseler Fi 5 sports racer as a German-registered machine as seen at the 1935 Deutschlandflug (German Air Rally).

▲ IPMS West Sussex modeller Norman Salmon added a dash of humour to this crashed 1/48 Sopwith Camel diorama, captioning it as: Flashhart was not having a good day. But at least he hadn't come down 'sausage side'! He used the Eduard Camel, adding suitably damaged rigging and real wood interplane struts to depict a convincingly 'pranged' aircraft.

▲ Rob Jones indulged in a spot of kit-bashing and scratch-building with his Emhar 1/24 Bedford OSB recovery truck, which featured a re-worked load bed and side panels, plus extra detail, including tools, equipment and wooden beams.

▲ Brampton IPMS's Windsor Kendrick created his custom-spec 'Ork Speed Waaargh' from a Warhammer Ork truck, scratch-building a host of extras to the basic vehicle, including a new cab, turret (from another kit) and mesh enclosure/cage. He then posed it riding with an army of Squig-riding Orks.

▲ Photographs can often act as inspiration for a build, and this was the case for Fenland & Spalding modeller Paul Scott, who based this extensively modified Australian Army mobile workshop Jeep on a single image. The starting point was Tamiya's 1/35 Willys MB, onto which he added scratch-built workshop equipment.

▲ Airfix's 1/35 Alvis FV622 Stalwart Mk.2 was built by West Norfolk IPMS's Graham Matthews almost straight from the box, adding just oil drums – sourced from the spares box – as cargo, along with a small section of netting to secure the load.

“Try before U deny”

Mike Williams completes a vehicular star of the *Stranger Things* franchise with Revell’s Surfer Boy Pizza Van

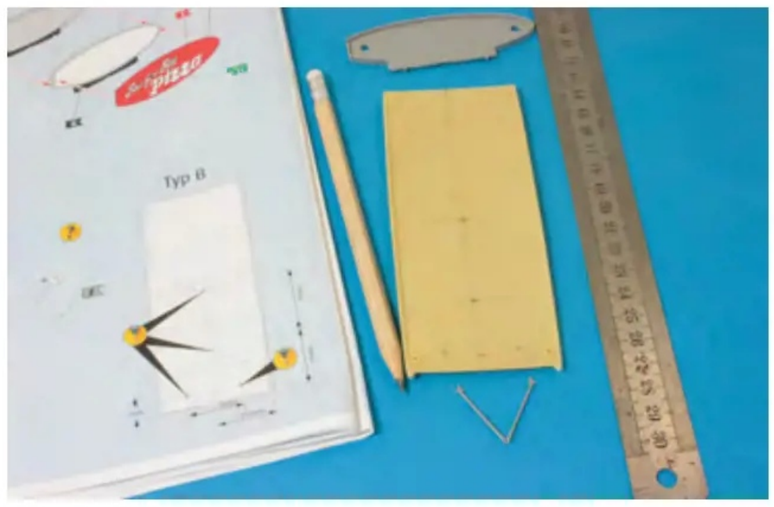
One of three iconic vehicles released from Revell in its *Stranger Things* series, this Volkswagen T3 ‘Vanagon’ is based on the firm’s own 43-year-old tooling with several new parts to match the specification of the vehicle on Netflix’s hit show. The new elements are the roof advertising sign and bumpers, grilles and aerials. There’s also a crocheted pizza blanket with insulated delivery box, all on a newly tooled runner moulded in the normal dark grey plastic, as opposed to the rest of the mouldings in creamy beige styrene. The pizza van appears in Season 4 of *Stranger Things*, driven by Argyle, who is the friend of major character Jonathan Byers in California. For the uninitiated, ‘Try before U deny’ is the tagline for Argyle’s company, Surfer Boy Pizza.

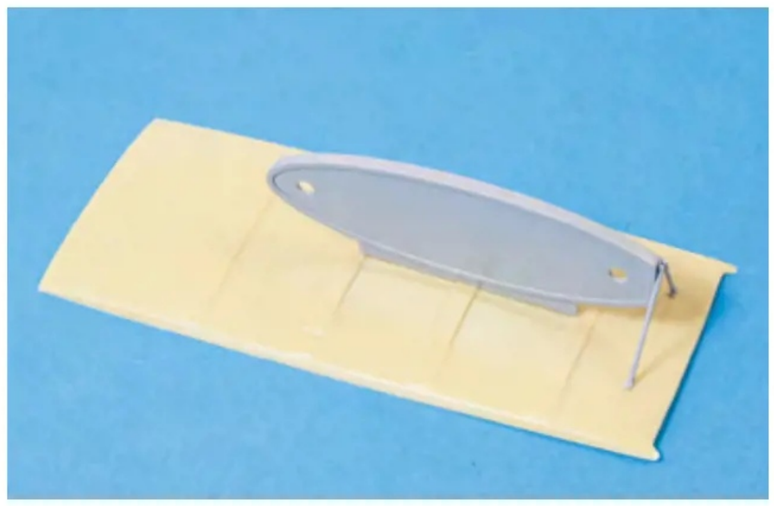
Mixed refinement

Revell’s original parts for the VW T3 showed their age with flash on several larger pieces, and almost all components suffer from mould seams requiring remedial work. Particular areas

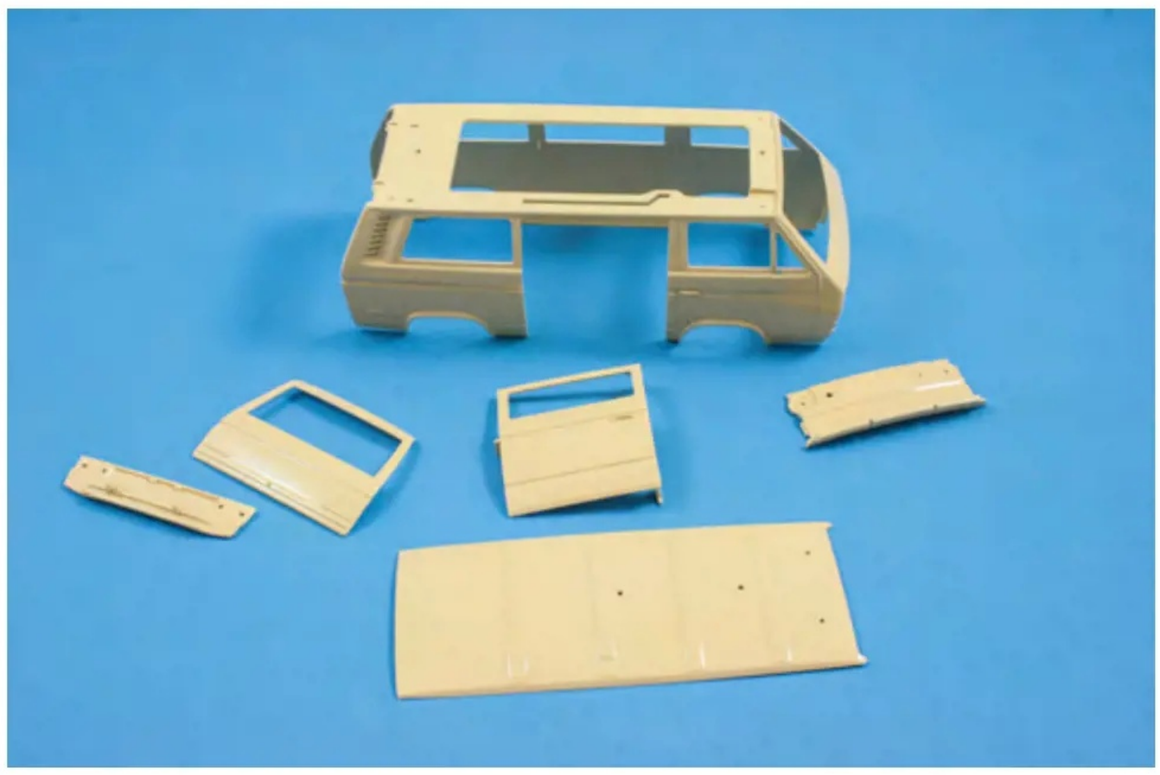
MODEL SPEC

Stranger Things Argyle’s VW T3 Surfer Boy Pizza Van
By: Revell
Stock Code: 07725
Scale: 1/25
Price: £41.99
Available from: www.revell.co.uk





▲ Following the instructions, holes for the roof were measured and drilled to accept parts for the surfboard advertising panel. Test-fitting showed how they would sit on the finished model.



▲ All relevant components requiring the body colour were prepped and painted, followed by the application of clear lacquer to make them ready for decals.

▲ The excellent decals settled perfectly onto the body and, once dry, were sealed with a second clear coat.

seemed simplified, while others were more than adequate. A full engine was included but edged towards the basic, although extra detail could easily be added. The engine bay cover was a separate item, allowing it to be viewed from the inside if desired, but this would be obscured by the new parts for the crocheted-effect blanket and pizza delivery bag, so it was kind of academic. The rest of the kit looked in good order, with brilliantly clear window parts on the appropriate runner – although there were minor scratches and blemishes on two parts. The decals were the standout item in this kit as they were printed beautifully, with additions to enhance the dashboard and interior, along with vehicle-specific markings such as the Surfer Boy Pizza logo and telephone number should you wish to place an order. So, all in all, it's a mixed bag that requires care and attention, but which offers a fun, representative model from the TV show.

Work that body

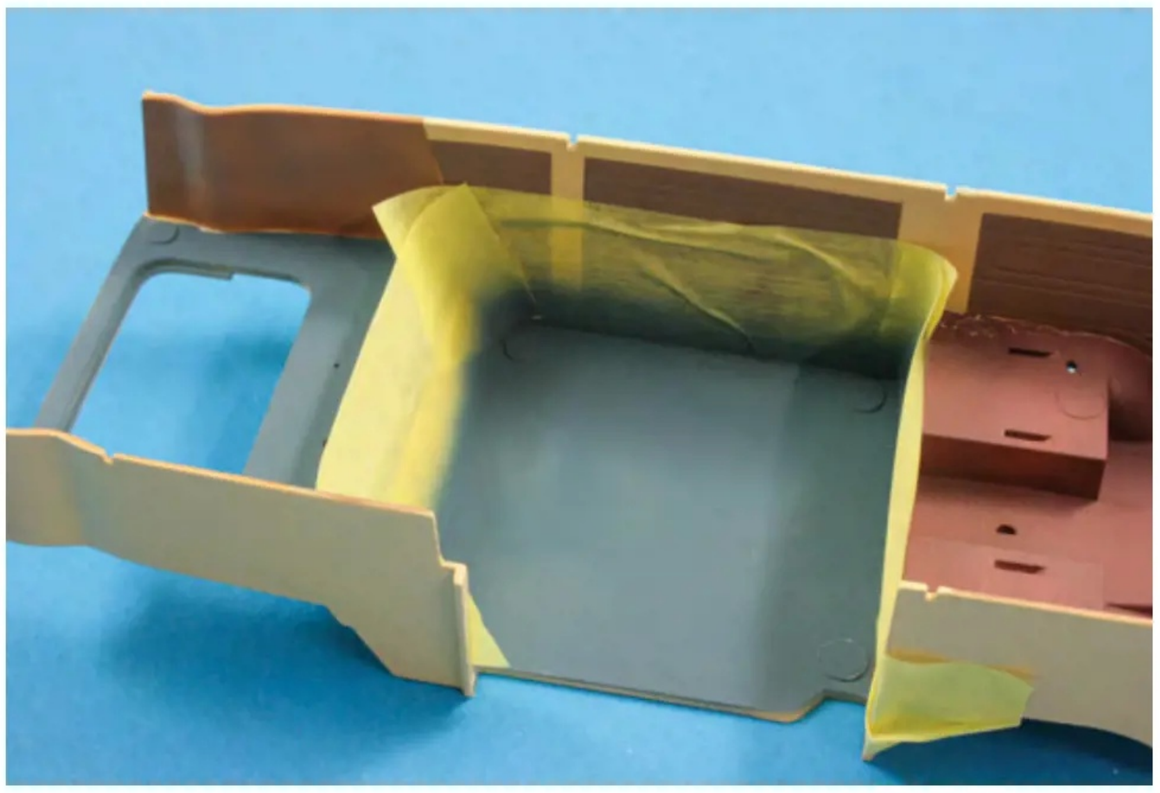
The outer shell can be the make or break of a vehicle model, so preparation always helps to ease the painting process, eliminating the possibility of finding moulding flaws or anomalies under the paint. To that end, all sections for the main body, including the separate side and rear doors, were sanded smooth with wet and dry paper of varying grades, ensuring any mould lines/seams were removed, thus keying the surface for primer and paint.

The roof panel needed modifying to accept the surfboard advertising unit. According to the instructions it could simply be glued to the roof later in the build or holes could be drilled to accept the moulded locating pins. Pinning and gluing is always preferable to butt-joins with glue for integrity, so the relevant holes were measured and marked as per the diagram provided, before they were drilled.

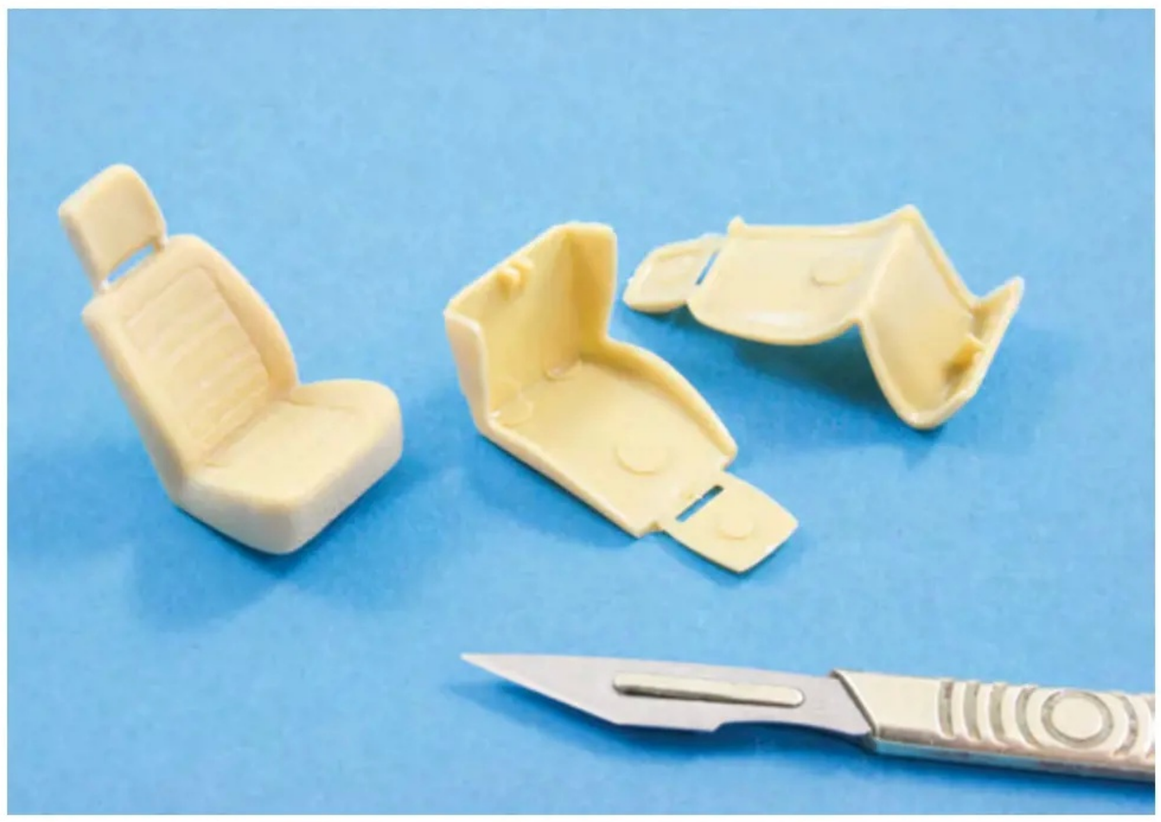
The rest of the bodyshell was prepped in short order, so everything could be primed and polished before paint and lacquer. All parts to receive the body colour were first painted with a primer which, when cured, was smoothed with sponge-backed sanding sheets. The exact shade was hard to ascertain. On watching the TV show and studying screen grabs, it was definitely on the pale cream shade of the spectrum, but nowhere near the yellow hue demonstrated on the box art. Although not listed on the instructions' paint guide, Revell has a comprehensive paint list on its website, with a recommended colour of RAL 1001 Beige. So, this was mixed to as close an approximation as possible using the automotive paint system I employ in my day job. With the beige paint cured, a generous coat of clear gloss lacquer was applied for both protection of the paint and in readiness for the decals, and was set aside for a day or so to fully harden.

Decals for the bodywork all slipped into place effortlessly and dried smoothly so they could get a second, lighter coat of clear lacquer to seal them. The body work could then be sidelined

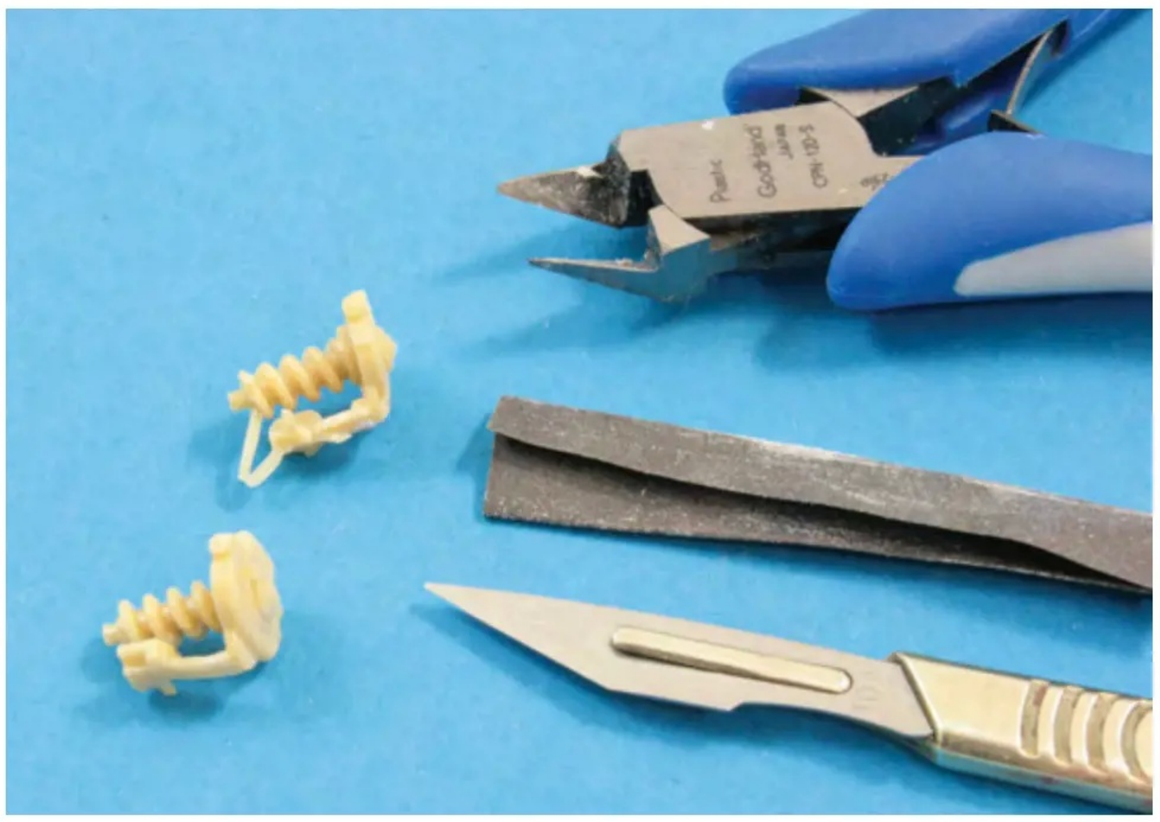
"Revell certainly knows how to get the most from its mouldings"



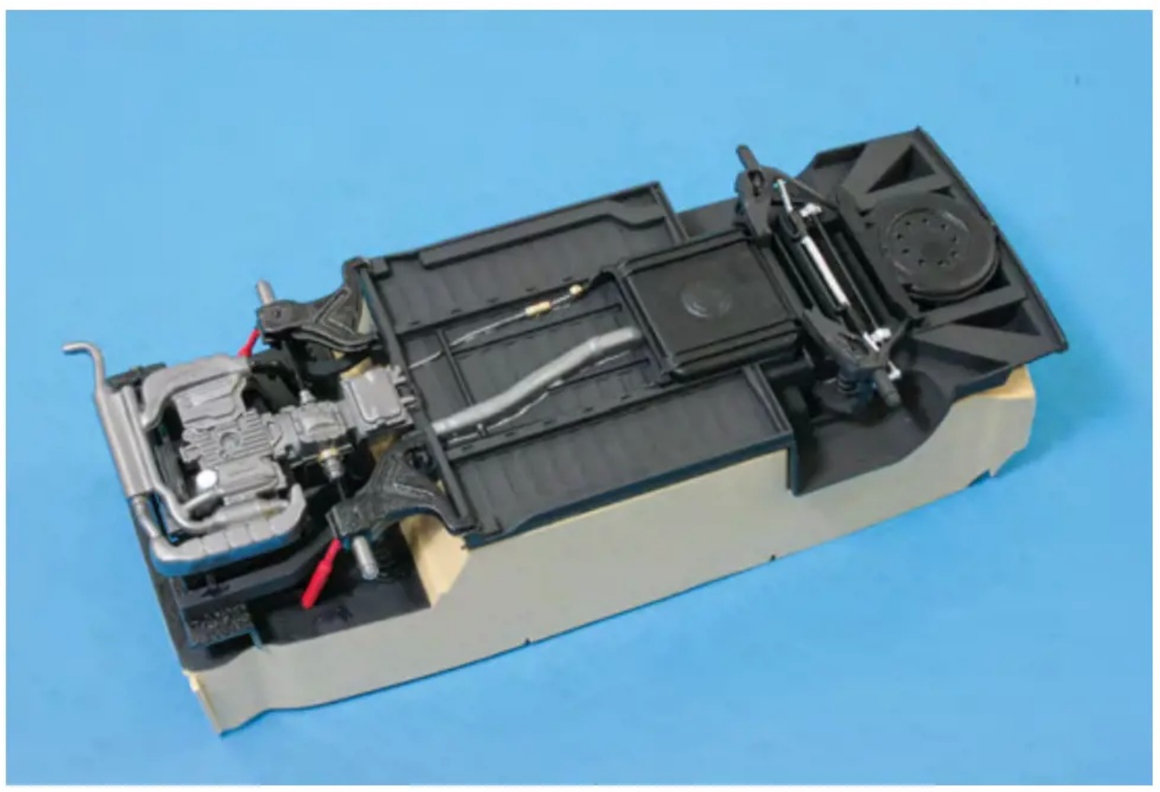
▲ These small holes in the floorpan needed filling as they were for seats not relevant to this model. Slivers of plastic card were inserted and sanded flush, before masking for the blue colour was applied and the paint sprayed.



▲ The seats needed care in preparing them and removing any moulding flash, ejector-pin marks and seams, but ultimately were decent representations.



▲ Revell's suspension units needed much fettling, trimming and sanding with small pieces of wet and dry paper to remove mould seams and flash.



▲ The chassis, engine, transmission, suspension and steering racks were all painted and decaled prior to assembly. Once together, the chassis was fitted to the interior section.

while the interior and chassis were completed.

Underpinnings

Attention turned to the chassis, engine, transmission and suspension, plus the underside of the body. The main chassis was a one-piece unit to which everything attached, such as the engine, driveshafts and suspension units. All these smaller pieces were carefully tidied by removing mould lines and flash with a sharp blade and small pieces of wet and dry paper, before being readied for paint by attaching them to 'handles' fashioned from wooden cocktail sticks and small crocodile clips.

Most parts were simply airbrushed in Tamiya X-18 Semi-Gloss Black, after which the details could be accentuated with various metallic shades and, where appropriate, colours such as those on the suspension arms, for example. After each part had been readied for paint, they were test-fitted to ensure no problems would rear their heads when it came to assembly, so all the underpinnings were finished and attached to the chassis as per the instructions and looked convincingly busy once complete.

Interior designs

The large section for the interior was tackled next and close adherence to the instructions was followed, as the painting was quite complex, with varying brown and beige shades, as well as blue for the rear cargo area floor. Two smaller tab holes needed filling and sanding smooth before painting, but I initially missed this section in the instructions, so had to go back and fill, sand and repaint the floor after the interior had all been meticulously masked and painted. Another consideration was that of the interior decals, of which there were quite a few and again, could easily be missed. Once painted and decaled, the cabin looked suitably stylish in an early 1980s brown-beige.

Internal details such as the steering column and wheel, dashboard and seats were carefully painted and detailed, and fitted without issue. One note here: oh-so-Eighties-style beaded seat covers were supplied as excellent decals, but they needed care to fit as they defied manipulation and tore easily. The crocheted mat and pizza box were painted and decaled as per the instructions and they looked good when dry, especially the decal for the blanket which, when applied over the textured mat, appeared particularly convincing.

The handbrake and gear lever were fitted after the seats and steering column, completing the interior, which could then be married to the previously finished chassis sub-assembly.

Wheels, wakeboard and windows

Rubber window surrounds were painted next as the paint and clear coat on the bodywork had had time to fully cure. These were not particularly difficult, just needing care to ensure continuity around each window to ensure they were all the same width. The insides were masked too, using extra-wide tape to avoid overspray marring

"Care was needed when attaching the body, as it had to be gently eased and squeezed over the chassis and interior"

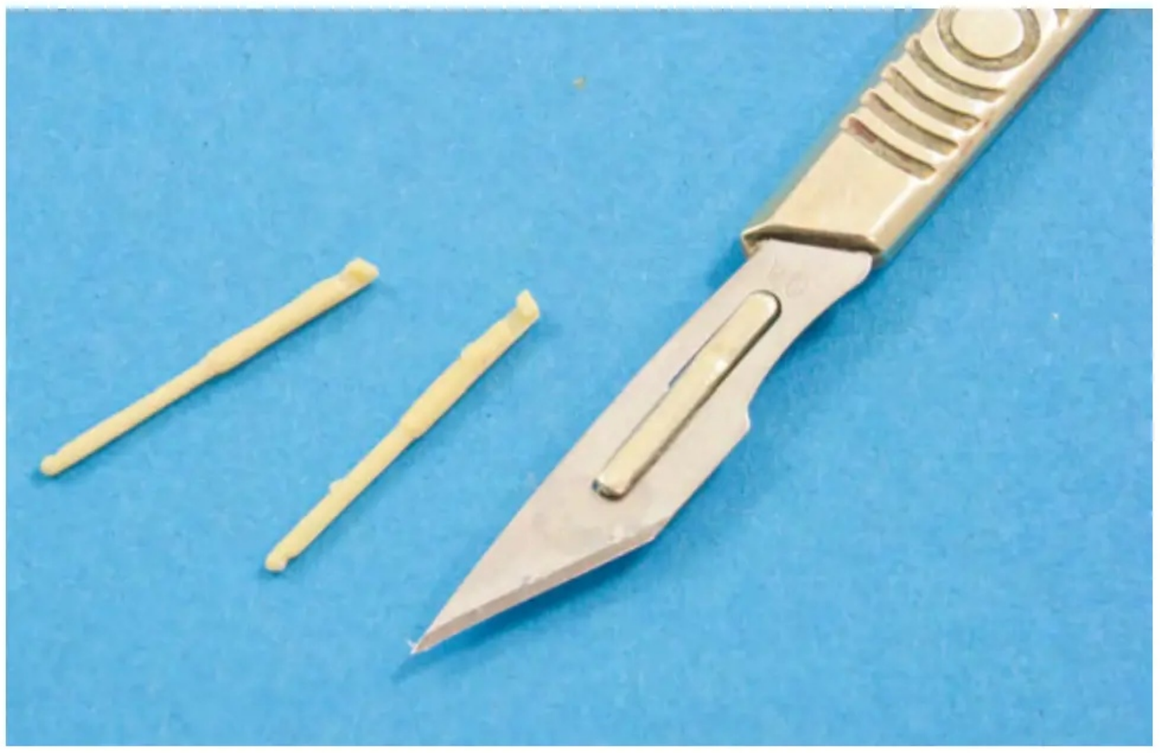
the interior of the bodywork. Window surrounds on the side and rear doors were also masked and painted at the same time; all rubber surrounds were painted with Tamiya X-18 Semi-Gloss Black.

Wheel hubs received the same shade before being sprayed Tamiya LP48 Sparkling Silver, which provides a splendid chrome effect. The tyres were genuinely pleasing, requiring nothing more than a quick swipe with a sanding stick around their circumference, to remove the mould lines, after which the hubs were glued into them.

The roof-mounted advertising surfboard was painted and decaled next, and was simplicity itself to deal with. The framework and support rods were painted Flat Aluminium, while the embossed faces of the surfboard sections were airbrushed in gloss red. When dry, decals were duly applied and settled well over the logos, though care was necessary to ensure they were properly aligned before they dried. A light coat of gloss acrylic varnish sealed them once dry, and they looked perfect before being set aside to add later in the build.

The windows needed care to make sure they were mounted correctly as there is little surface area to fix them to the body, especially the large side glazing. The windscreen and rear window panels fitted better than the others, requiring almost no glue to secure them. The rest were fixed with carefully applied liquid cement, taking care not to spoil any of the clarity.

▲ Surfer Boy decals fitted perfectly over the raised logo on the surfboard and on the rear window.



▲ The rear door hydraulic stays needed neatening to remove mould seams and ejector-pin marks. The left-hand example here has been neatened, while the right-hand stay still exhibits the offending marks.

▲ Decals came to the fore when dealing with the interior parts and the VW logo on the front grille. Seats, steering column and dashboard all came to life with their decals in place. Note the crocheted rug and insulated pizza box decals.

▲ The rubber window seals were masked carefully (on the inside too) before being airbrushed with X-18 Semi-Gloss Black.

Ease and squeeze

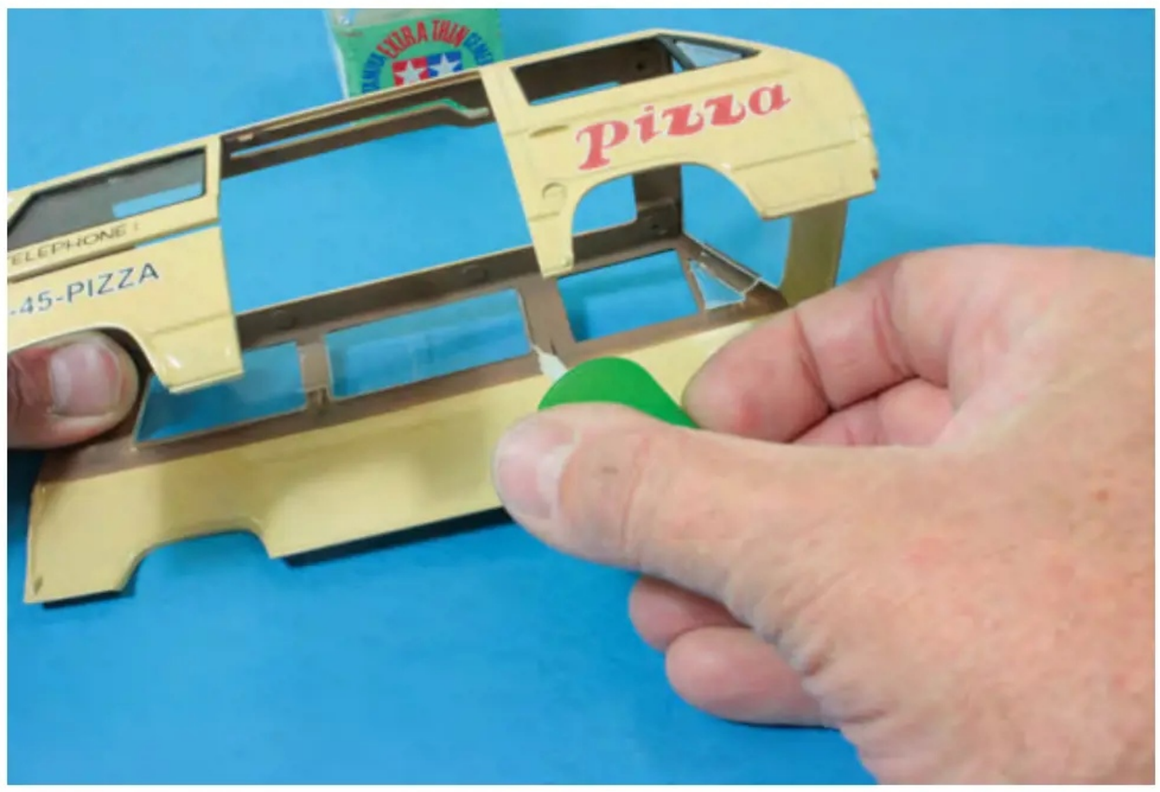
The finished chassis and interior sub-assembly were now ready to have the (almost) finished bodywork attached, making for a sturdy vehicle to which the final periphery could be added. Care was needed when attaching the body as it had to be gently eased and squeezed over the chassis and interior, while ensuring the sliding door section was in place using the runner guides. The sliding door was meant to be left unglued, allowing it to be opened and closed. However, the fit of the runners was tight, and if any sliding was attempted, it was under duress, so it was posed open and left alone. Front and rear panels simply clipped into place with positive locations, just needing their respective head and taillights, numberplates and grilles adding, along with the new bumpers, which had previously been painted satin black.

The roof panel section was left off until after the bodywork had been installed, as this needed a little help to ensure it sat properly atop the body and was held in place with strategically placed strips of masking tape until the glue dried, after which the roof sign was installed. The window wipers fitted easily, as did the new aerial just in front of the windscreen, these all being secured with sparingly applied superglue. Then the

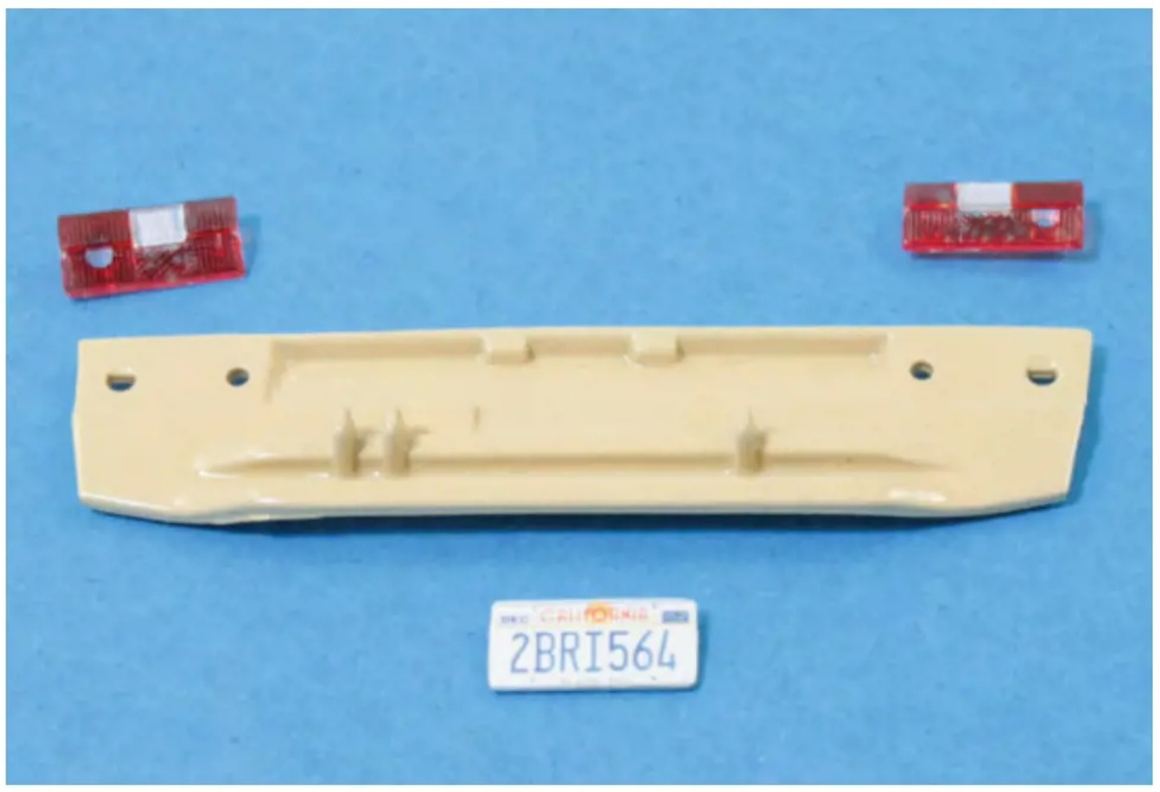
“The outer shell can be the make or break of a vehicle model”

▲ Revell's wheels were painted gloss black, while the hubcaps received a suitable chrome silver. When dry, the rims were simply and easily pushed into the tyres.

▲ The completed interior looked good once everything was together. Note that the engine would be covered with the floor section and rug with pizza bag.



▲ The van's glazing sections were attached carefully with sparing amounts of liquid cement.



▲ The rear bumper had the lights and numberplate fitted. Clear sections of the lights were painted on their inside faces beforehand..

▲ Tape held the roof panel in place while the glue dried. The side door was fitted too but did not like being slid open, so was positioned halfway. The wheels were also popped into place.

rear door was attached open so the pizza bag and interior could be seen, but the fit was slightly woolly, with no real positive locating pins or parts – even less helpful should you wish to close it. Superglue saved the day here, with the rams being fitted to hold the door open and superglue being (sparingly and carefully) run along the upper join before being zapped with accelerator to set it instantly.

Final verdict

Revell certainly knows how to get the most from its mouldings, this VW Van having been reissued more than 20 times since 1982. The base kit is sound, if a little elementary in its design and detail. The extras pertinent to the *Stranger Things* franchise do enhance it though, and the decals are superb (printed by Eduard, we are given to understand).

If you want a representation of the pizza van from Netflix's smash hit series, it fits the bill. However, if you want a highly detailed replica then you might be left wanting – or you could detail it with scratch-building to whatever level you desire. AMW

MATERIALS AT A GLANCE

Tamiya (www.hobbyco.net)
X-7 Gloss Red
X-18 Semi-Gloss Black
X-11 Chrome Silver
XF-10 Flat Brown
XF-16 Flat Aluminium
XF-18 Medium Blue
XF-52 Flat Earth
XF-59 Desert Yellow
XF-90 Red Brown
LP-78 Sparkling Silver

RAL 1001 Beige
(Tamiya nearest equivalent XF-55 Deck Tan)

Mr. Color (www.albionhobbies.com)
GX100 Clear Gloss

Editor at large **Chris Clifford** gets in racing mode with Clear Prop's 1/72 DH.88 Comet *Grosvenor House*

From Mildenhall to Melbourne

Some aircraft simply look fast on sight and one such machine was the DH.88 Comet... and it was quick for its day, with a 220mph cruising speed. The de Havilland DH.88 was created to participate in 1934's famous England to Australia MacRobertson Air Race, being flown by private pilots, and it was prestigious and pioneering in equal measure. Three DH.88s (among many other types) competed: G-ACSP/63 *Black Magic*, G-ACSR/19 (known as 'The Green 'Un') and G-ACSS/34 *Grosvenor House*... that last example being overall winner of the speed race section with a time of 70hrs 54mins 18secs, and the subject of Clear Prop's splendid new 1/72 kit.

◀ **Clear Prop's DH.88 comes with PE brass details to enliven the styrene. Included are seatbelts, instrument panels, rudder pedals and propeller backplates, among other items.**

MODEL SPEC

DH.88 Comet Advanced
By: Clear Prop Models
Stock Code: CP72019
Scale: 1/72
Price: €22
Available from:
www.clearpropmodels.com

Not for the beginner

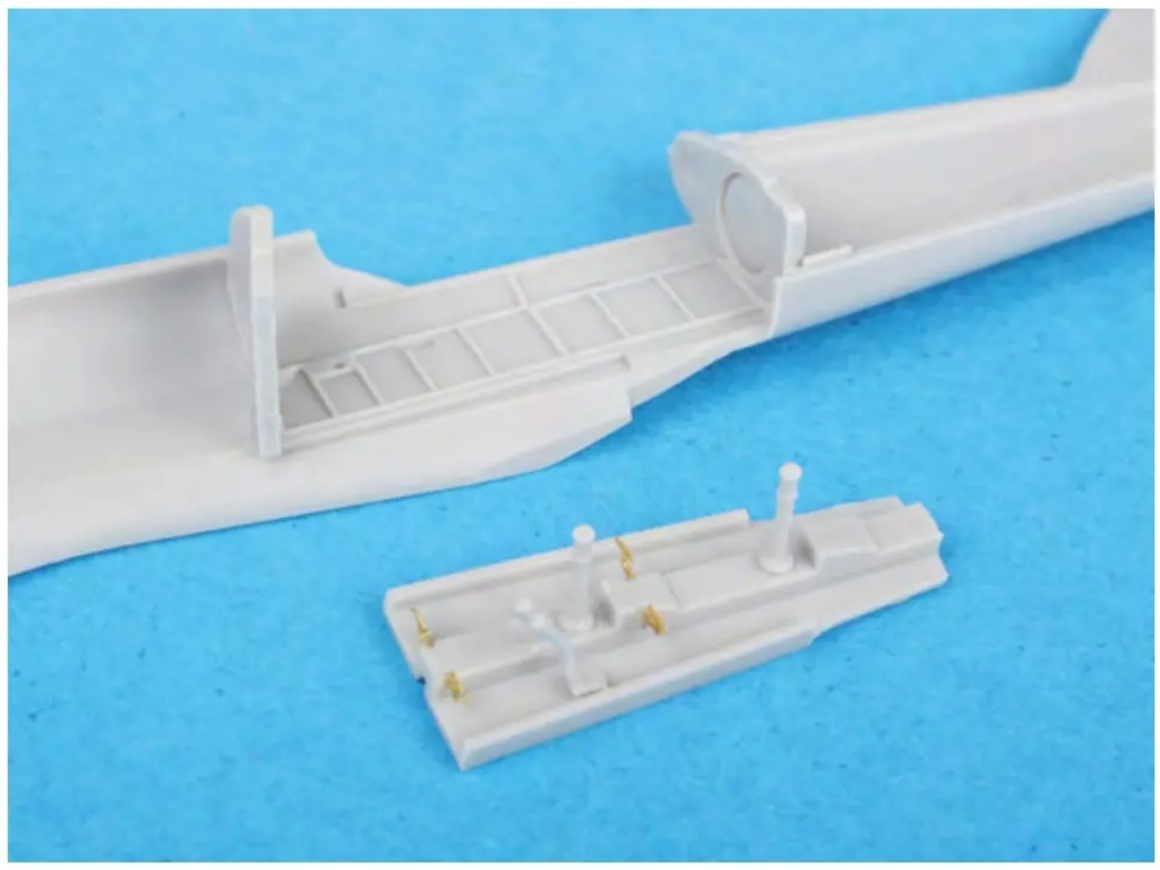
Its 105 mainly styrene parts come on three grey runners and exhibit

excellent detail, fine panel lines, and just the barest hint of flash around the front of the rudder mass balance. All remaining components are flash-free and well moulded. Clear Prop's depiction of taut fabric where necessary is commendable. Some parts are delicate, such as the undercarriage struts, so care will be necessary when removing these from the runners, due to slightly thick attachment points.

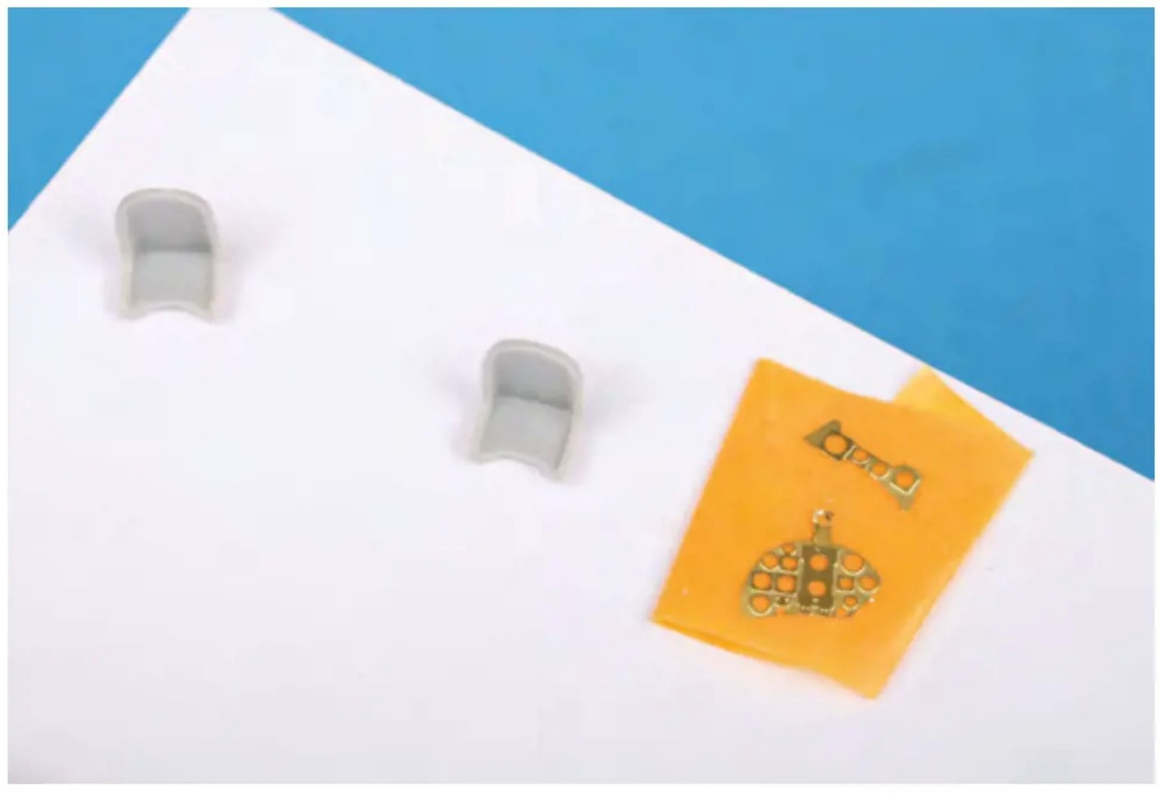
Also provided is a small photo-etched (PE) brass fret, carrying cockpit features such as instrument panel facings, seat harnesses and other interior sidewall features. The one-piece canopy and nose cone are admirably clear, although note that Clear Prop has, in parallel, released an aftermarket vacuum-formed canopy for the kit, along with paint masks and a complete 3D-printed resin and PE engine. All were pressed into service here.

Cockpit construction came first, which demanded attachment of rather fiddly PE rudder pedals, plus control columns, to the floor. The instructions stated 'Tan' for the predominant cockpit colour, and I took this as emulating wood. So, Tamiya XF-57 Buff was airbrushed on the floor, cockpit sidewalls and front/rear bulkheads. Once dry, a Winsor & Newton oil paint mix of Naples Yellow Hue and Brown Madder was brush-painted sparingly over the Buff. Beforehand, blobs of both were left on kitchen paper overnight (before being mixed) so much of the oil was taken away – therefore hastening the drying time. A black oil wash was mixed, then touched along all cockpit recesses and where angles met. Any excess was removed soon after with a dry brush.

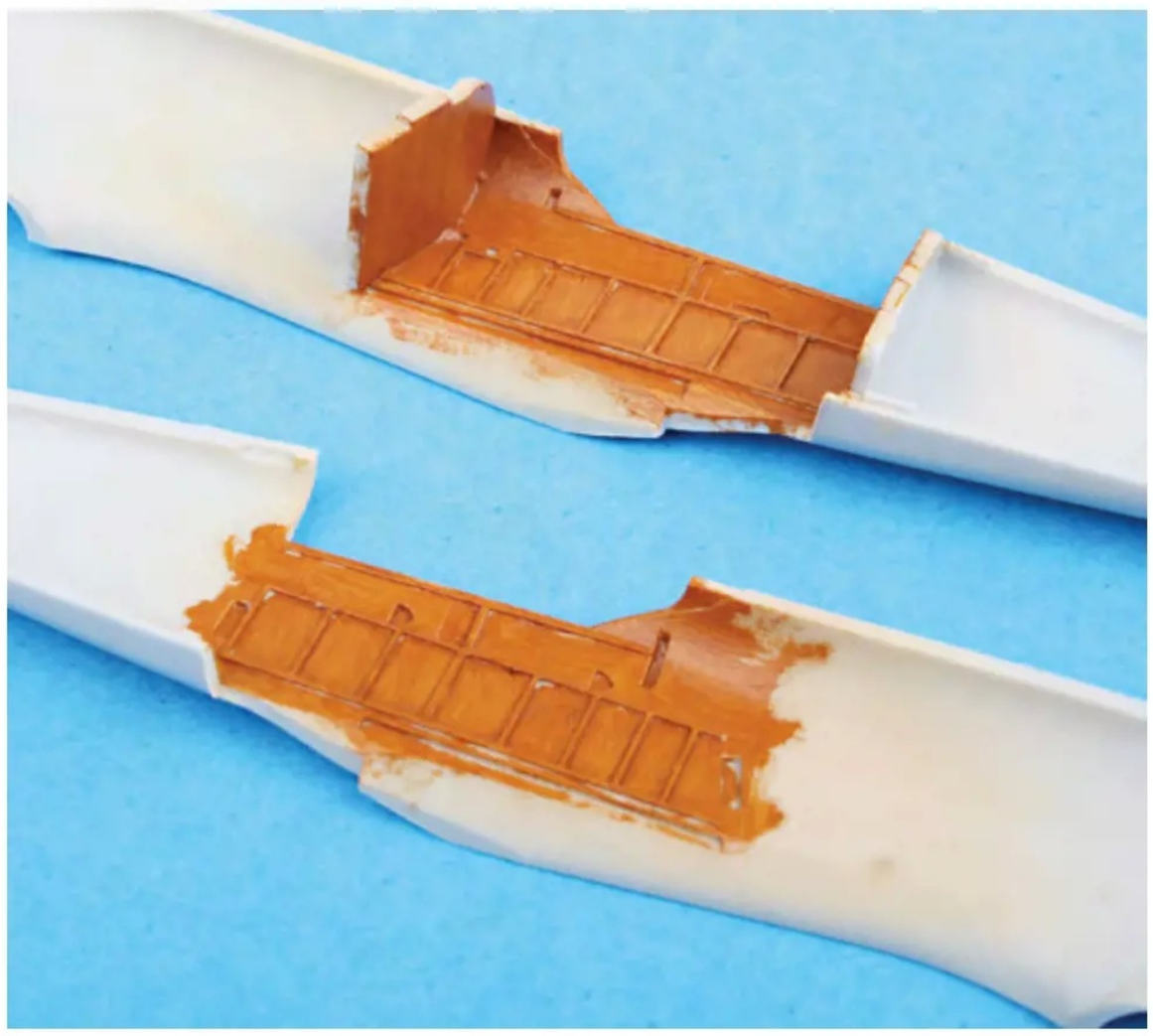
Next, the seats, and the styrene instrument panels and their PE facings, were sprayed gloss black, while the control-column grips were brushed with the same shade, and Interior Green, as shown by the instructions. Once all this had dried, the instrument-panel decals were applied, followed by the facings (which had been painted black)... the latter being fixed with PVA glue, which dries clear. The following task was to attach the trim wheel, compasses and throttles to the sidewalls, then paint them. Testimony to Clear Prop's quest for detail, the compasses each received decals and PE azimuth circles. I also attached the head



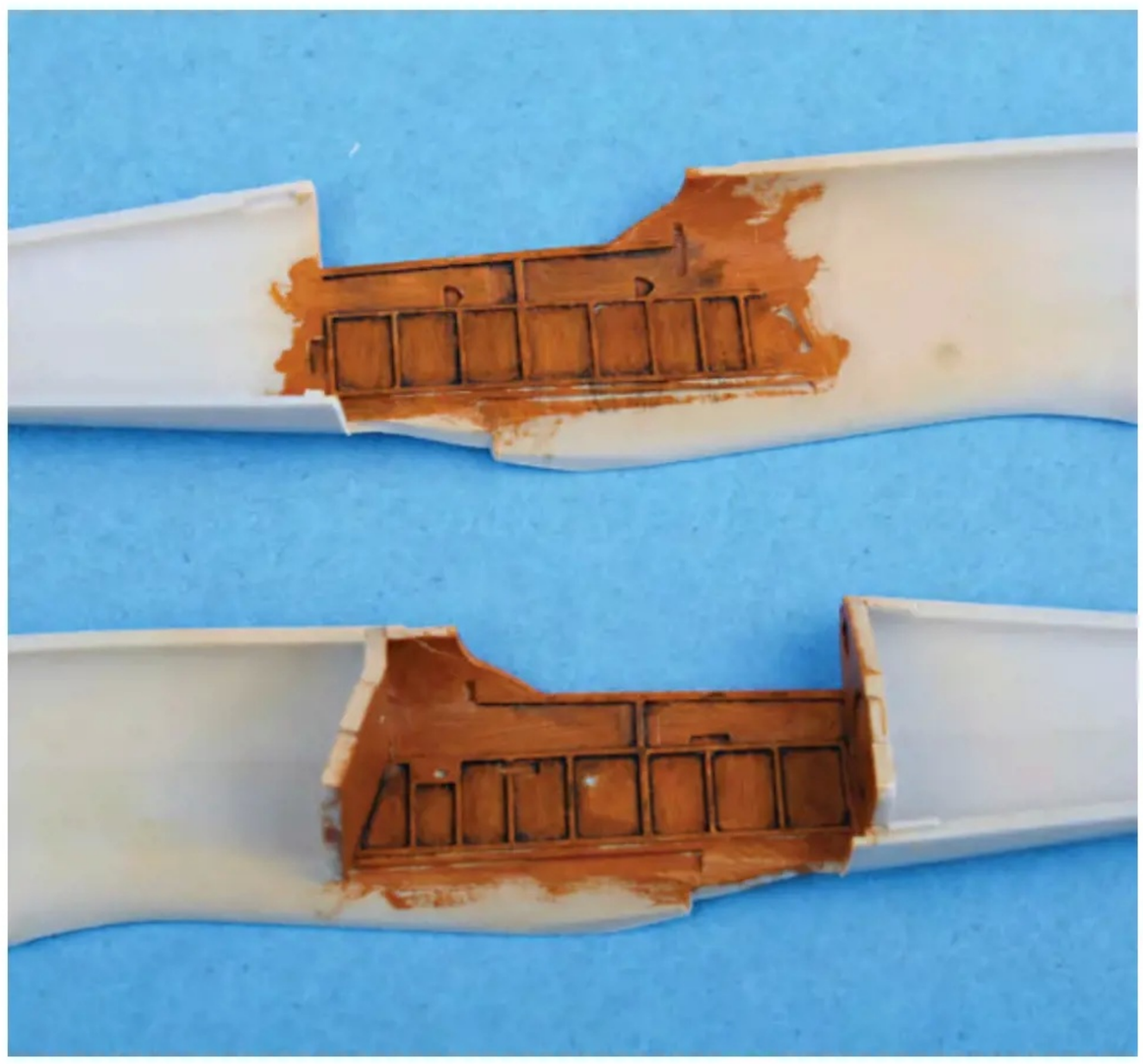
▲ Initial construction involved adding the cockpit bulkheads to the starboard fuselage half, and attaching the control columns and PE rudder pedals to the floor.



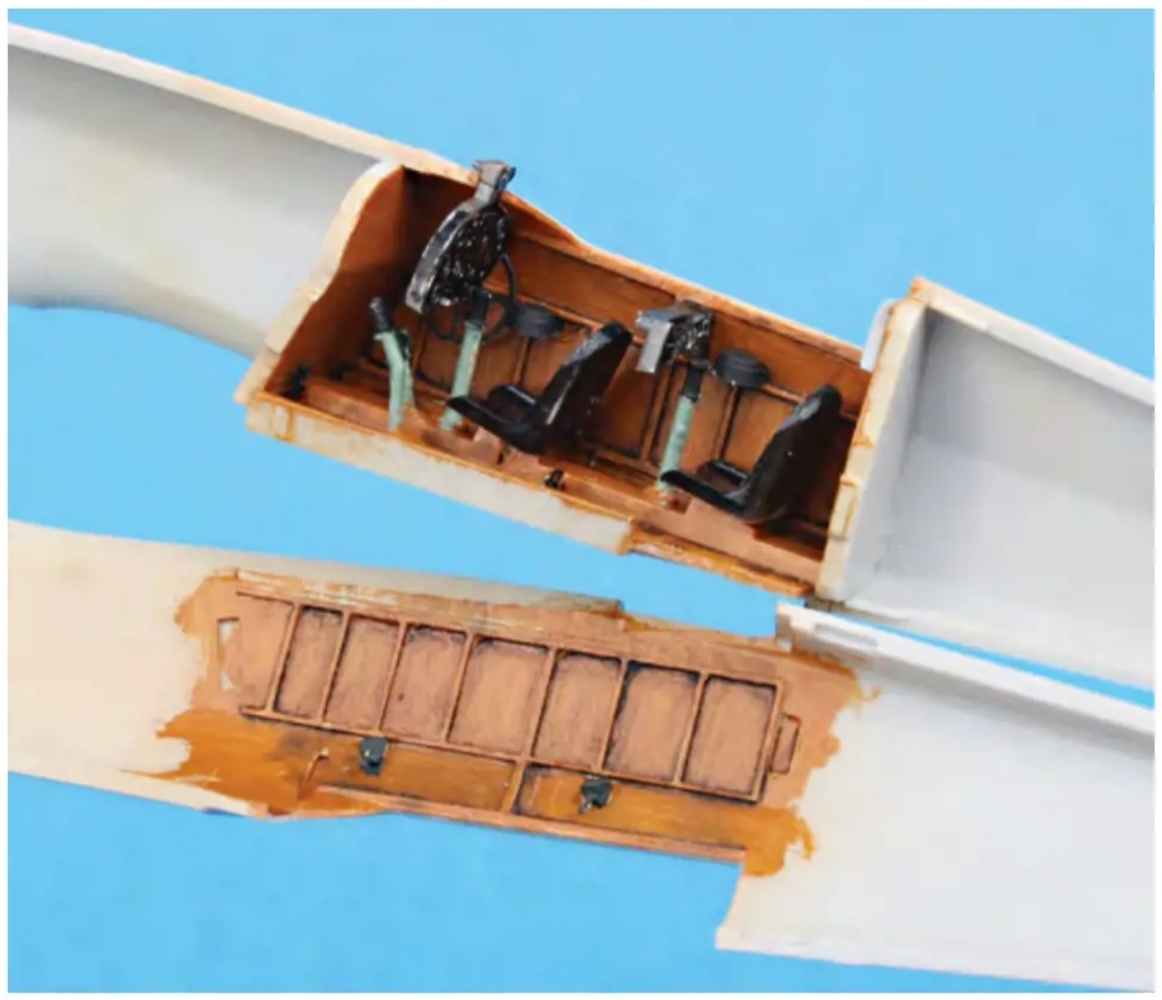
▲ Here, the seats and instrument panel top layers have been fastened to card, ready to be airbrushed black.



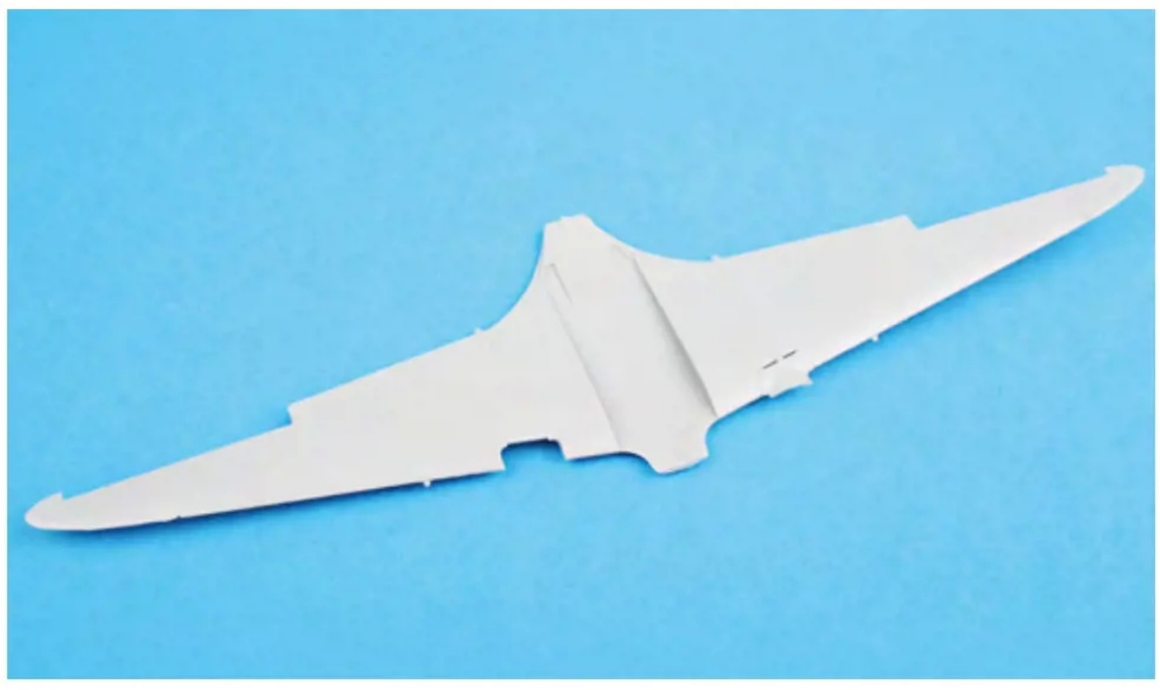
▲ Once Tamiya Buff paint was sprayed on the cockpit sidewalls, floor and bulkheads, a 50:50 mix of Brown Madder and Naples Yellow Hue oil paint was applied by brush, to emulate varnished wood.



▲ Black oil-paint wash flowed around the moulded recesses provided more depth to the sidewalls.



▲► Seats and instrument panels were completed and attached; Interior Grey Green control columns ensured a splash of extra colour.



▲► The wing upper halves were married to the one-piece lower span, then the upper engine nacelle panels were added.

cushion to the rear bulkhead and the instrument panels were fixed to the starboard fuselage half. The fuselage could then be closed and this took just a slight degree of clamping while the liquid cement dried, but no filler was necessary.

Mainplane moves

The wings were also assembled and duly mated with the fuselage and – for a limited-run kit – the fit thus far was praiseworthy. Seam sanding was minimal and carried out with an angled-handle Flex-I-File. In a break from the build order, though, I skipped ahead slightly to also attach the horizontal/vertical stabilisers (which had integrally moulded mass balances), plus the ailerons.

It was then time to tackle the main undercarriage and, be warned, it's challenging, with each frame-type unit comprising six parts. Do ensure the join for each piece is properly dry while building these sub-assemblies, to avoid distortion. The other issue is that the undercarriage mounting walls are a little too thick for their corresponding slots on the inner faces of the nacelle halves – so a degree of fettling is warranted. Once built, they just need painting gloss black and the mounting wall (plus the inner faces of the nacelles) in grey; I opted for Tamiya X-1 Gloss Black and Humbrol 140 Gull Grey, respectively.

Clear Prop's instructions nominate colour 'N' in Stages 15 and 16 for the contoured undercarriage doors, but no 'N' shade is actually listed by the painting guide. However,

"Clear Prop's 1/72 DH.88 isn't a kit for beginners"

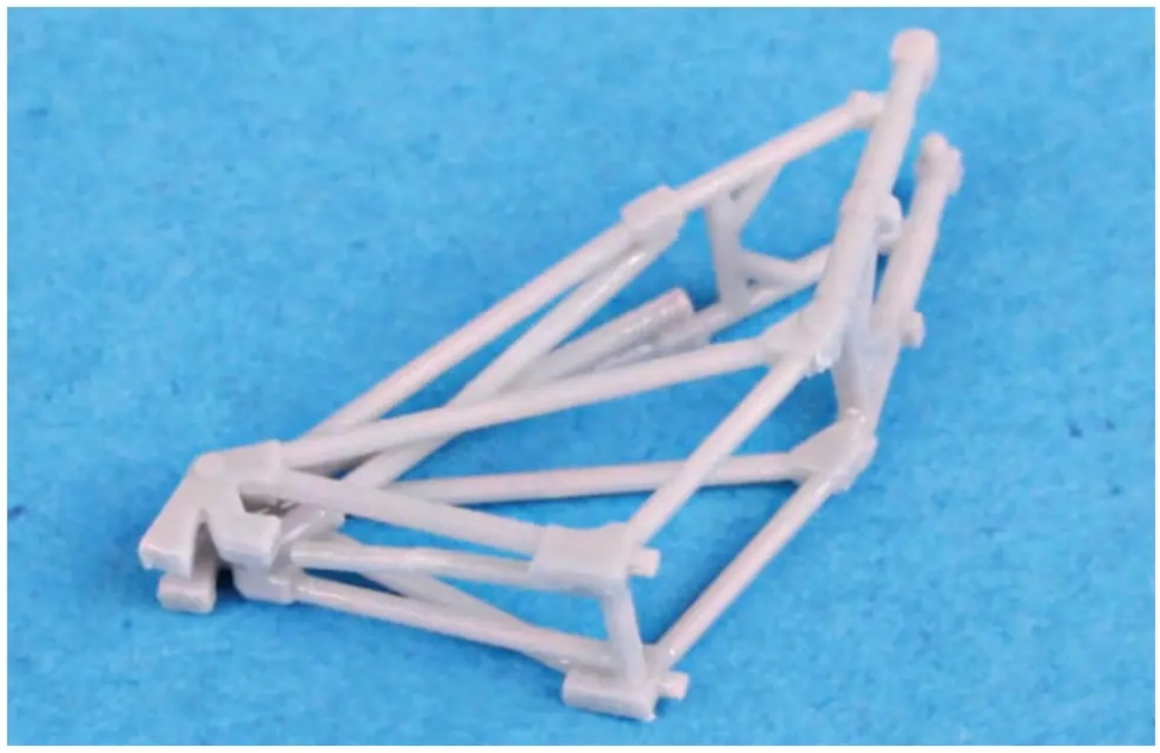
common sense and study of the airframe suggest that the inner face received Gull Grey, while the outside was painted in the body colour. Here, the instructions state Mr. Color C3 or AMMO's A.MIG-0049. Neither resided in my paint box, but a good match lay in SMS's PL03 Red, which I did have.

Clear Prop kindly provided its bespoke aftermarket engine, besides the sample DH.88 kit, and it seemed a shame not to use it. The upgrade comprises a resin powerplant with PE brass fixtures, and it was duly assembled and painted accordingly. But its employment demanded that the front half of one nacelle be cut away along the appropriate panel line, and this was done with repeated passes of a scalpel blade. Engine bearers are already supplied in the kit, in case you wish to display the engine.

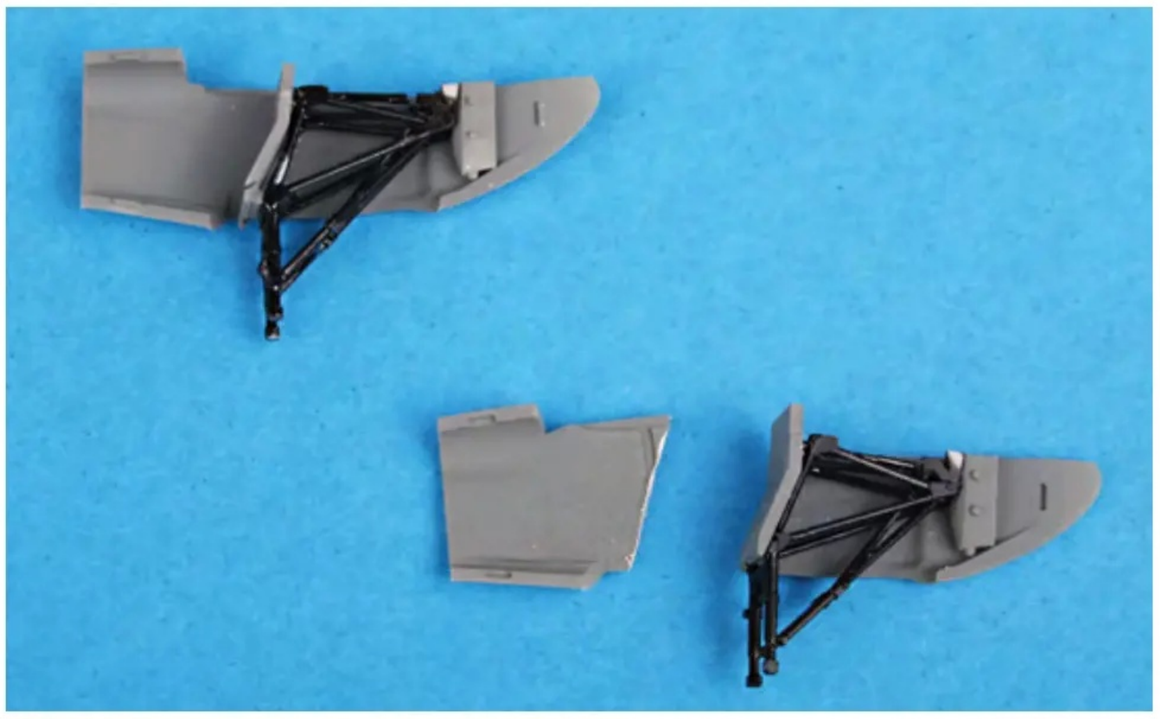
Aftermarket engine

The powerplant itself is a beautifully detailed item once assembled. I don't know about you, but my tolerance for very small PE parts seems to erode with age. However, a deep breath to calm the nerves, fine tweezers and sparing amounts of cyanoacrylate (CA) glue applied with a sharpened cocktail stick ensured the resin and PE engine built as it should... mostly. Once completed, it was sidelined temporarily while the engine/undercarriage nacelles were attached to the wings and this went swimmingly, with just a minor application of Mr. Surfacer here and there, plus gentle sanding.

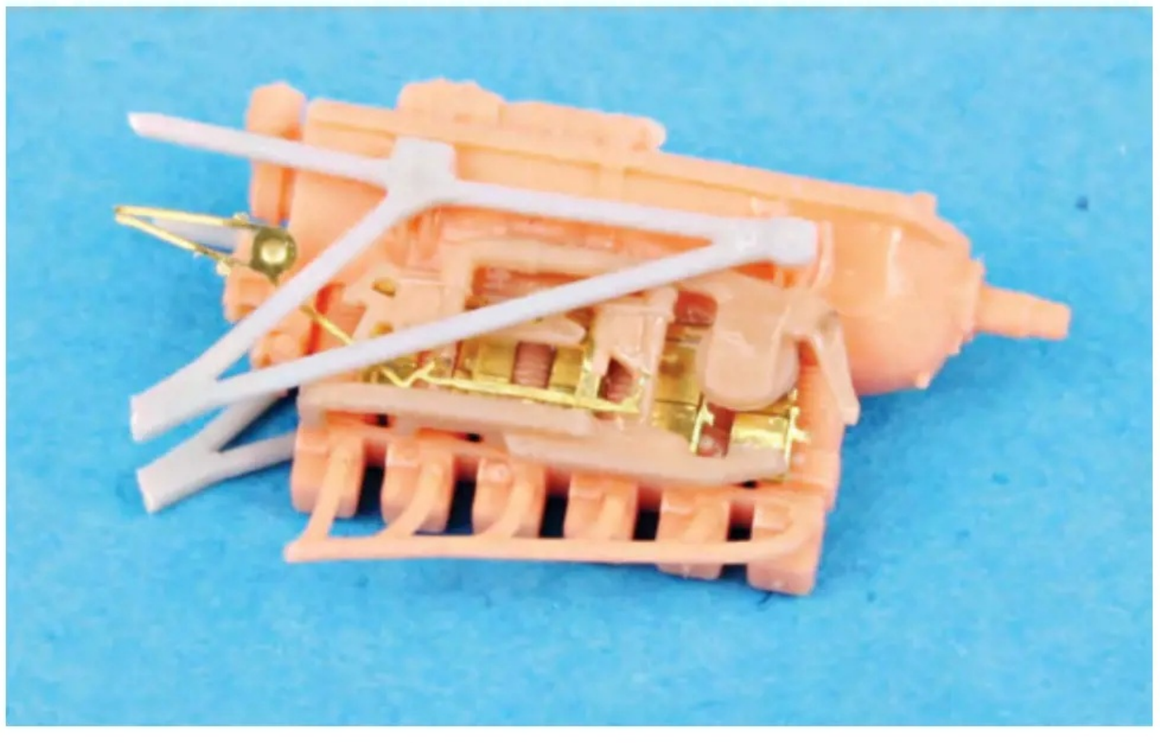
The next task was to paint the seatbelts and it was at this point that I realised I'd forgotten to add the lap belts before closing the fuselage... it would be more difficult as the seat pans were quite low inside. However, after airbrushing them with Tamiya Flat White they were duly attached with CA. The canopy could then be fixed and I



▲ Construction of the multi-part undercarriage struts was fiddly. It's best to ensure the glue has set on each piece before trying to attach another, to achieve proper alignment.

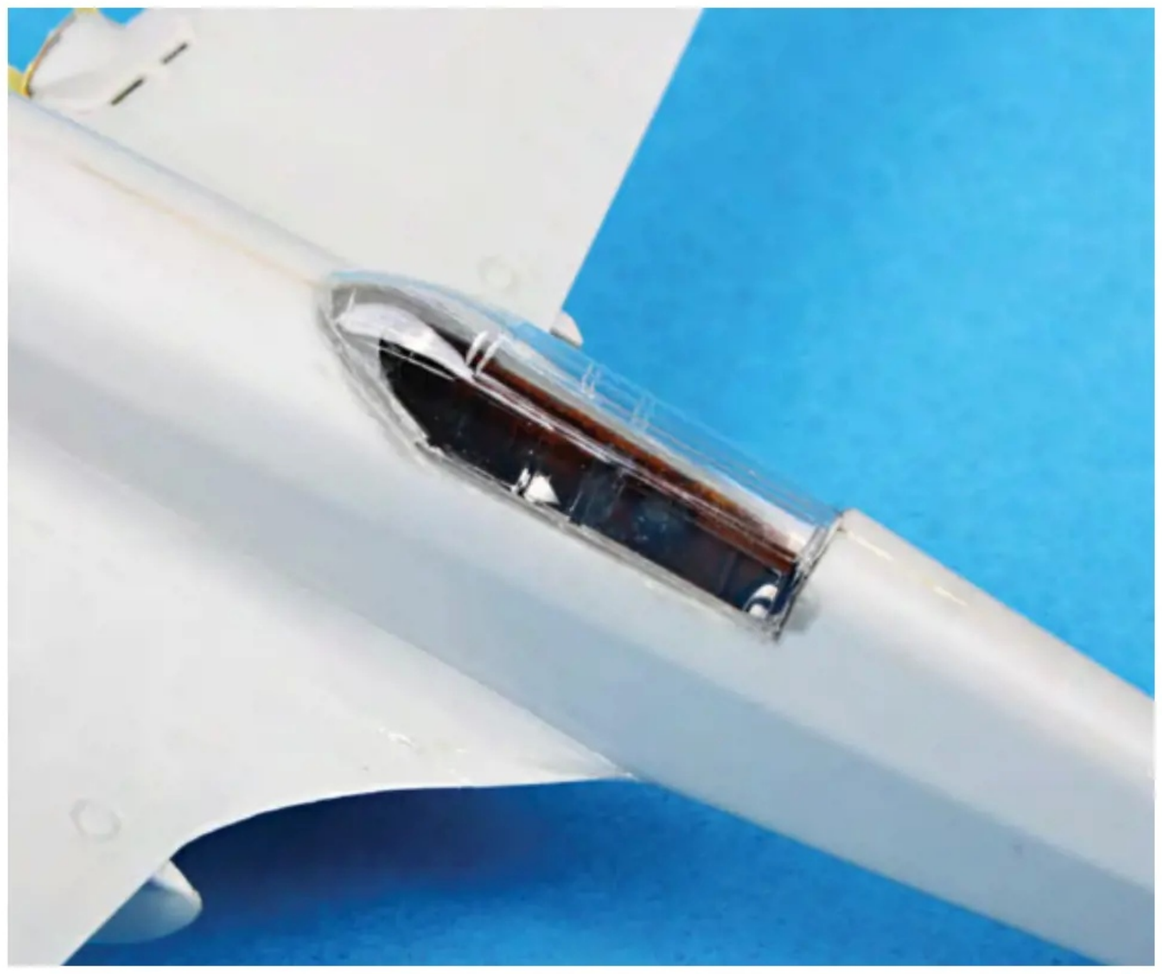


▲ The undercarriage assemblies, minus mainwheels, were painted black and located in the nacelles... the inside of the latter being painted grey. The engine covers were parted from one of the nacelles, so Clear Prop's aftermarket engine could be displayed.

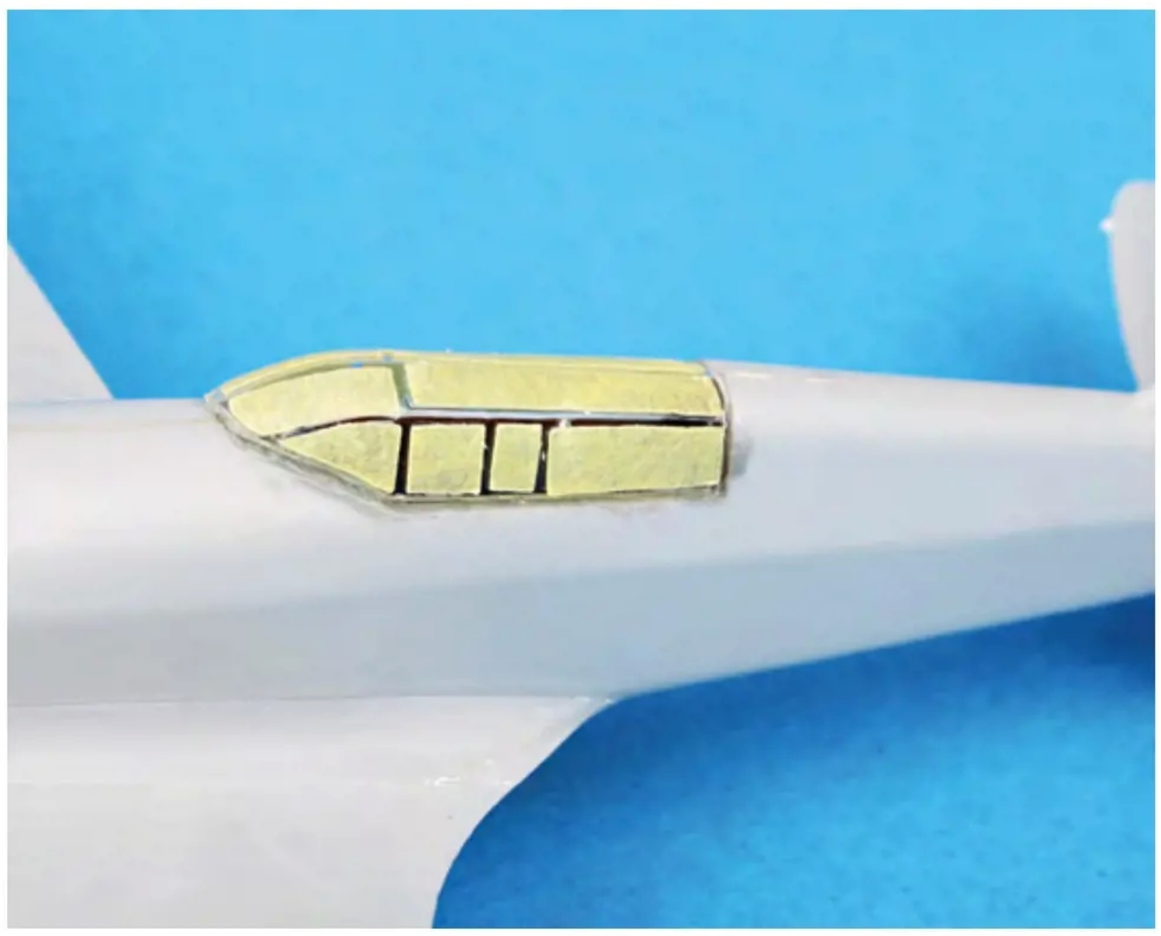


▲▶ Stunningly detailed, the 3D-printed aftermarket resin engine gains more embellishment via PE details – and mounts on styrene bearers.

▲ White-painted seat harnesses were fastened with superglue, then bent into their resting positions.



▲ Clear Prop's vacuum-formed canopy, also an aftermarket item, was fastened with Kristal Klear glue. It definitely offered more clarity and shine than the kit's styrene glazing.



▲ The aftermarket canopy masks were applied to the glazing once it had set on the fuselage.

▲ Frustratingly, due to clumsy handling, both horizontal stabiliser mass balances were broken and lost. Replacements were fashioned from anglers' pole-fishing elastic, with blobs of Kristal Klear forming the bulbous fronts.

wanted to have it closed to help preserve the sleek lines of the fuselage. Thus, no masking of the cockpit would be required – just the canopy itself.

Cockpit glazing

Clear Prop's vac-form canopy was snipped from its surrounds with the aid of a fresh scalpel blade and precision scissors, and attached with Microscale's Kristal Klear, which dries... clear, so you don't have to worry about glue marks. After overnight drying, the canopy received its bespoke pre-cut masks, which fitted well. At this point, I noticed that my inherent clumsiness (which usually affects all of my builds in some form) had caused me to break and lose the integrally moulded mass balances on the horizontal stabilisers; oddly, the vertical stabiliser's mass balance had survived. But how to scratch-build new items?

My other hobby is angling, and it struck me that anglers' rubber pole-fishing elastic of a suitable thickness would work well, because it would remain flexible and resistant to breakage. Therefore, short lengths were glued to the stabilisers. Then the model was placed nose-down in a vice and blobs of Kristal Klear were applied to the ends of the stems, in the hope that the PVA would form the required bulbous fronts. And it worked splendidly.

Priming was the next task, this being via AMMO One Shot Grey primer, which was left to dry overnight before the SMS red top colour was applied. While this dried, the aftermarket engine was painted matt black before it received Humbrol 32 Dark Grey and 98 Chocolate accents where appropriate. Once cured, the gloss red looked lovely and ready to accept decals. These were applied with the aid of Microscale setting solution, to help the markings sink into engraved detail where necessary. Panel lines were minimal on this model, but I still wanted to accentuate what was there. I selected Ultimate Modelling Products' Dark Dirt wash, which is clay based, therefore the excess can be removed with a water-moistened cloth.

"It was then time to tackle the main undercarriage and, be warned, it's challenging"

Not quite pristine

Having considered the model's final finish, I thought about the MacRobertson Race route, which passed through southern Europe, the Middle East, Asia and then Australia. *Grosvenor House* would have negotiated dusty and fairly rough airstrips along the way, so I figured the model shouldn't look too shiny. I also left a little wash here and there beforehand to simulate hints of grime. This build was an opportunity to trial a

MATERIALS AT A GLANCE

AMMO (www.migjimenez.com)
A.MIG-2053 Lucky Varnish Glossy

Humbrol (https://uk.humbrol.com)
32 Dark Grey
98 Chocolate
140 Gull Grey

Mr. Color (www.albionhobbies.com)
GX112 Gloss Super Clear III UV Cut GX varnish

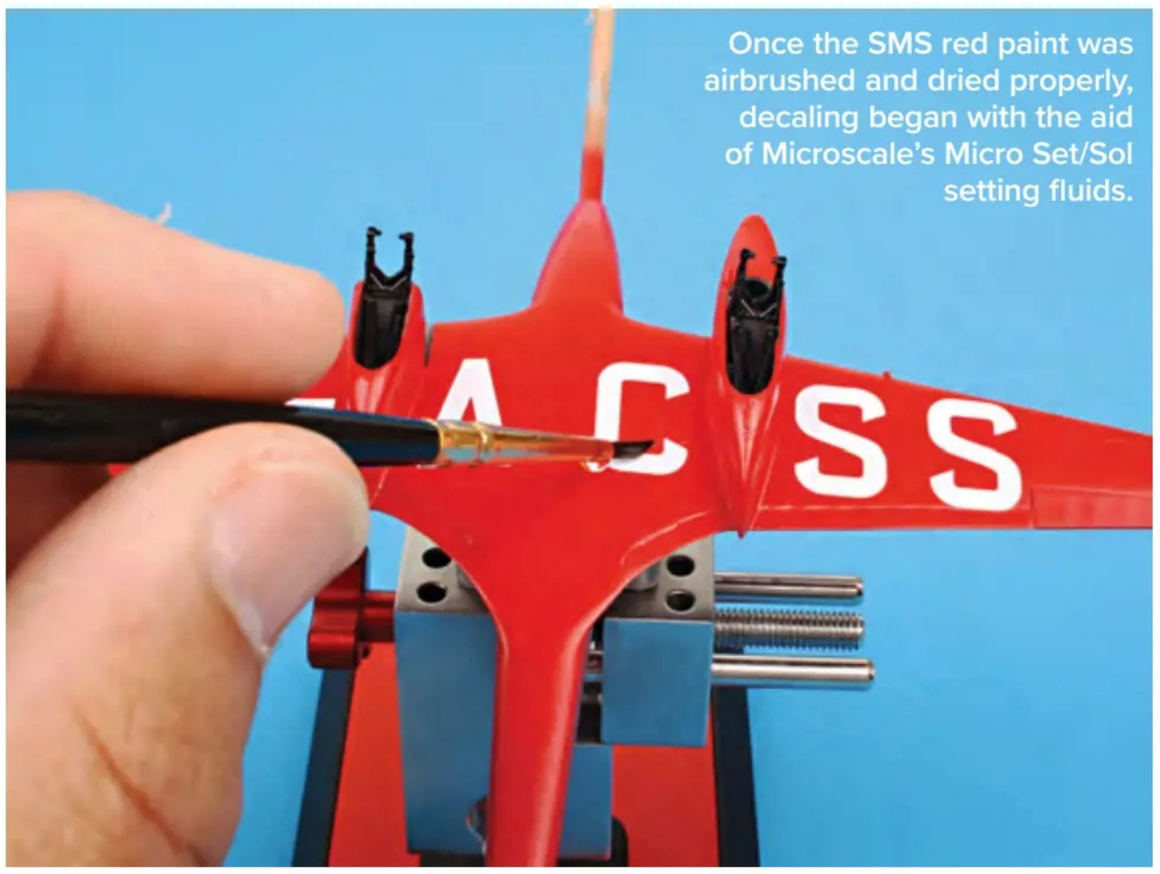
SMS (www.albionhobbies.com)
PL03 Red

Tamiya (www.hobbyco.net)
X-1 Gloss Black
X-25 Clear Green
X-27 Clear Red
X-32 Titanium Silver
XF-1 Flat Black
XF-2 Matt White
XF-57 Buff

Ultimate Modelling Products (www.umpretail.com)
Dark Dirt wash

Winsor & Newton (www.winsornewton.com)
Brown Madder
Naples Yellow Hue
Raw Umber

The model primed with AMMO One Shot Grey, ready to accept the red top coat.



Once the SMS red paint was airbrushed and dried properly, decaling began with the aid of Microscale's Micro Set/Sol setting fluids.

“Some aircraft simply look fast on sight and one such machine was the DH.88 Comet”

varnish new to me, in the form of Mr. Color Super Clear III UV-Cut GX Gloss. It airbrushed well once diluted with Mr. Color Thinner on a 50:50 basis, and ‘misting’ it produced a shine stronger than eggshell, but not too glossy.

It was time for this DH.88 to gain its wheels, so the halves were mated and the seams sanded, before X-32 Titanium Silver was sprayed on the hubs. A lovely touch was DUNLOP titles being moulded on the tyres. The hubs duly received Clear Prop’s bespoke masks ahead of Flat Black being sprayed on the tyres.

It was time to attach the aftermarket engine, whereby superglue was applied to the bearer ends, these then being inserted in the locating recesses. Both propellers needed paint so, in accordance with the colour guide, matt black was sprayed onto the blades’ rear faces. I opted for Titanium Silver on the spinners and blade fronts. However, possibly due to a mistake (but I couldn’t be sure) on my part, the engine sat too far forward; this was betrayed by the propellers not being in line once attached. As a remedy, the engine was removed and the bearers – plus the propeller shaft – were shortened with fine cutters. The powerplant and propeller were then refitted and all looked fine, but I had to scratch-build the cowling support from wire and stretched styrene, because Clear Prop’s PE part was so fine and delicate that I found it impossible to preserve its form.

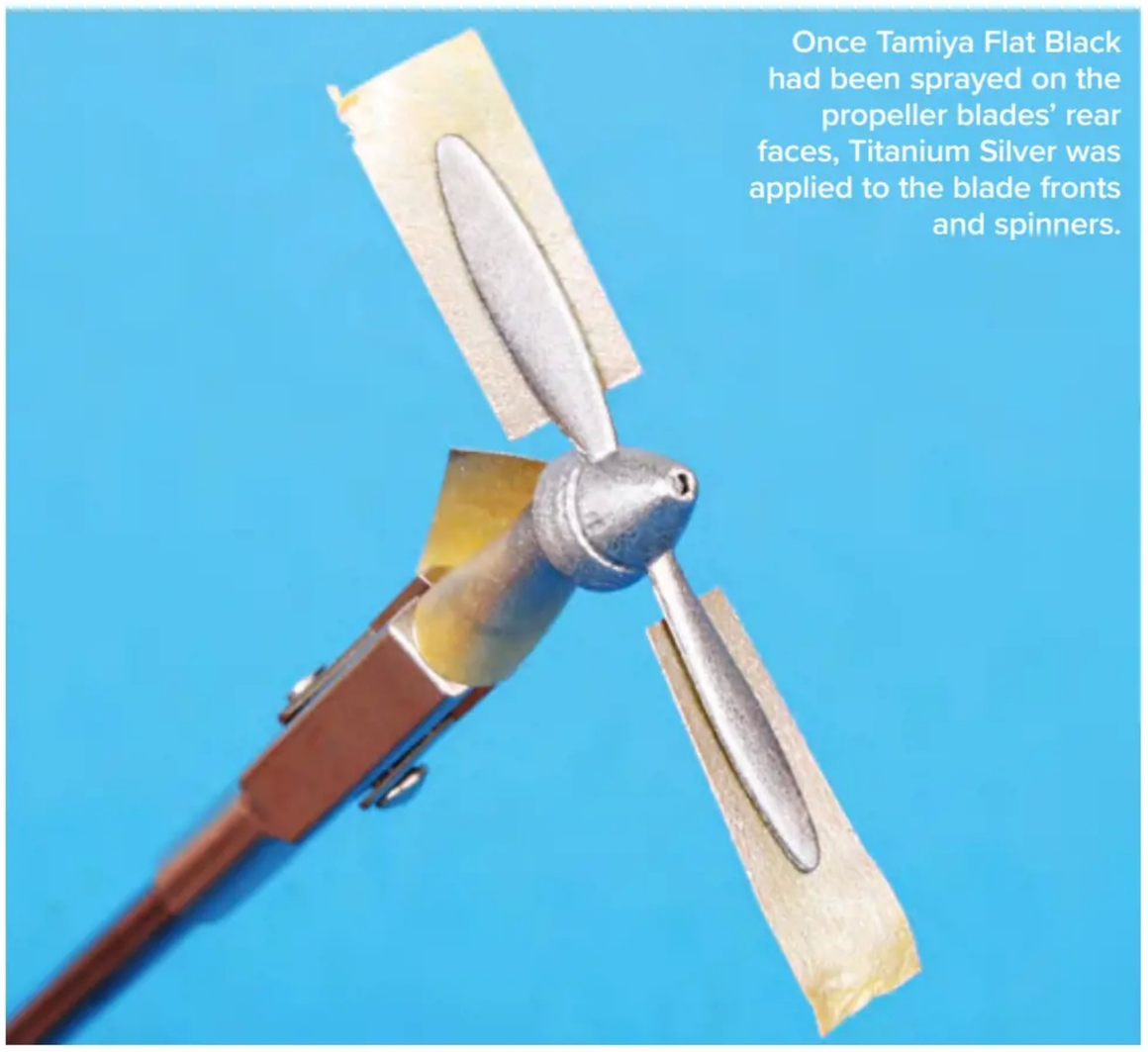
Final acts were to attach the clear nose cone and wheels. There was no issue with the former piece, after it was set with Microscale Kristal Klear PVA glue. But the wheels had to fit between two struts and there was little flexibility to bend the legs outwards, so the axle pins were trimmed accordingly. Lastly, wheel covers were attached without issue, while the wing leading-edge lights were first painted silver, then clear red and green for port and starboard, respectively. And that was it... one DH.88 across the finish line.

Skill required

Clear Prop’s 1/72 DH.88 isn’t a kit for beginners due to the presence of tiny PE details and styrene elements that were almost as small. But if you’re experienced with mixed-media builds you should be more than able to cope with it. The model looks fetching once completed and marks a significant point in air-racing history. Clear Prop’s replica also bridges the gap between Airfix’s 1/72 vintage styrene iteration and the same-scale all-resin/PE kit by SBS Model.

All the main decals adhered well and the opacity was good, with the white providing a stark contrast against the red airframe.

Here’s the painted engine attached to the starboard nacelle firewall. Note, the completed propellers have been positioned, too.



Once Tamiya Flat Black had been sprayed on the propeller blades’ rear faces, Titanium Silver was applied to the blade fronts and spinners.

DH.88

1:72
CP72052

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NEWS

Our coverage includes the happenings at this year's IPMS(UK)'s Scale ModelWorld event, Airfix's all-new 1/24 Messerschmitt Bf 109G-5/G-6 Superkit, and the release of 3D-printed resin upgrade parts and an FV703 Vigilant conversion for the same firm's 1/35 Ferret scout car, by FoxHopp Models. We also report on new decals from Model Art, Freightdog and Blackbird Models, along with a fascinating 1/35 MiniArt marriage of its German Lanz Bulldog tractor, 20mm Drilling and RSO trailer, and more besides.

NEW RELEASES AND REISSUES

Learn about LF Models' new-tool 1/72 MB-326 family, which debuts with the Embraer Xavante, plus associated bespoke aftermarket for these kits. Heller's 1/43 Porsche 962 also makes a comeback after almost 30 years, while another welcome reissue is that of the ex-Academy 1/72 F-84E/G Thunderjet, re-released again by Italeri. There are also articles on MiniArt's new 1/48 P-47N Thunderbolt, Special Hobby's reissued 1/72 Mirage IIIC, and the reworked Airfix 1/72 Mosquito in B.XVI, B.35 and TT.35 formats. Get the lowdown on Italeri's reworked 1/32 Tornado GR.1, too.

BUILD ARTICLES AND TECHNIQUES

See test-shot completion of Revell's new-tool 1/32 Gloster Meteor F.8/FR.9, the 1/48 EF-4C Wild Weasel Phantom by Zoukei-Mura, Airfix's 1/72 Spitfire Vc built as a Malta defender, and Brengun's 1/72 Tu-141 Strizh drone in Ukrainian markings. You can also learn much from our aftermarket build of Italeri's venerable 1/72 B-58 Hustler bomber, among other projects.

ACCESSORIES AND REFERENCE

Modellers seeking visual cues for building the US Navy A-7 Corsair can learn about Detail & Scale's new softback on the subject. We also cover 1/35 aftermarket items for German World War Two armour, by newcomer BSK, RAF groundcrew figures from Modelu, plus new primer colours by Ultimate Modelling Products. We also inspect new 1/48 USAF F-15 Eagle decals from Two Bobs and Xtradecal's fresh schemes printed for the SEPECAT Jaguar in 1/48 scale... and much more!

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www.keymodelworld.com

1

Wings Over the Fleet: British Naval Aircraft Since 1945

By: James Jackson
ISBN: 978-1-80035-334-3 **Price:** £34.95
Pages: 400 **Format:** 305 x 218mm
Web: wwww.crecy.co.uk

Naval aviation is a splendid theme, with Fleet Air Arm subjects being especially satisfying for many modellers. With that in mind, Crécy Publishing's lavish new hardback under the Hikoki imprint, *Wings Over the Fleet*, offers an absolute wealth of photos, insightful text and more. The focus is British naval aircraft from 1945 and it offers a wide choice of subjects, including development/unsuccessful proposals. This package of stunning visuals, history and technical detail – along with drawings and data tables – provides a broad and deep examination of the aircraft operated by the Royal Navy from war's end to the presen dayt. Classic types are covered: the Sea Hornet, Scimitar, Sea Vixen, Gannet, Wessex and many more. However, just as interesting as the serving aircraft are the project/specification aircraft, such as an anti-submarine Bristol Belvedere HAS.1. If you lean more towards fast jets, Phantom and Sea Harrier fans also have plenty to savour, and there's a section dedicated to the Buccaneer. In terms of visual reference, real gems sit among the vast number of photos, such as a Sea Vixen FAW.1 with day-glo fuel tanks, dummy Firestreak missiles and a refuelling probe, or a Westland Wessex in trial PRU Blue and Devon Red camouflage. Any modeller interested in British post-war aviation should find this book a real treat, especially if they favour seagoing types – and it's a highly useful reference regardless of whether you're a novice or knowledgeable on the subject. **CC**

2

Panzer Camouflage Volume II Wehrmacht Divisions Camouflage Patterns in WWII

By: Igor Donchik
ISBN: 978-9916-4-2435-3 **Price:** £45
Pages: 128 **Format:** 268 x 212mm
Web: https://not-toys.com/

If you obtained the first volume of notTOYS.com's Panzer Camouflage series, you'll surely have appreciated the well-detailed colour profile artwork and other views of different German armoured vehicles. Volume II takes a similar approach, delving into the 6, 7, 8 and 9 Panzer-Divisions, the Battle of Smolensk, Panzer-Regiment 332.Panzer-Division Das Reich, Sturmgeschutze-Abteilung 2 and 2.Panzer-Division Das Reich, tactical headquarters' signs and even an alternative history element. All artworks (save for those in the last section) have been rendered after study of many period photos. Types represented early in the book include the Panzer/Panzerbefehlswagen 35(t) and the Mörserzugmittel 35(t) artillery tractor, Panzer III ausf.L/Flamm, and Sd.Kfz.251 ausf.D. These soon make way for vehicles such as the Panzer 38(t) in different formats, the Hummel and even captured KV-1s in different camouflage. The 1941 Battle of Smolensk section takes four full pages to offer a potted history, which incorporates annotated maps. Modellers who enjoy building 'what-if' models have a pleasing and inspiring alternative history, which pivots around the hinge-point of a successful assassination of Hitler in July 1944. Much imagination has been employed here on vehicles such as the Tiger I, StuG.III ausf.G, Tiger II, E-10 and captured Soviet types, among other German vehicles. Many modellers find such colour illustrations desirable for inspiration and reference, so the content here truly delivers on that score. **CC**

3

The Last of the Red Hot Cats: The Story of the Civilian Grumman Bearcat

By: Robert C 'Bob' Kennedy
ISBN: 978-1-80282-957-0 **Price:** £30
Pages: 287 **Format:** 288 x 210mm
Web: https://shop.keypublishing.com

Designed as a smaller, lighter, faster and more manoeuvrable replacement for the Grumman Hellcat, the F8F Bearcat entered service with the US Navy and Marine Corps after World War Two, but would soon be replaced by early jets, such as the F9F Panther. While many were either scrapped or placed in storage, more than 25 were stripped of armament and modified into close circuit racers and warbirds, proving hugely successful at air meets and being a popular aerobatic display aircraft. This lavishly illustrated book is devoted to those surviving airframes, all in civilian hands, opening with an overview of the type's development and operational service, before documenting how certain machines – all F8F-1 or -2 airframes – were made available for the civilian market. From a modelling perspective, there's a bonus here in that all 'demilitarisation' changes are listed, which should make it easier to convert your Bearcat kits to racers. The focus then shifts to the events and races in which Bearcats were entered, which is where the magnificent collection of high-quality imagery really starts, depicting winners and entrants. One chapter addresses the Bearcat's tricky handling characteristics, which resulted in numerous crashes. The rest of the book is set aside for histories of each surviving civilian Bearcat, and it's a visual treasure-trove, both for the array of liveries worn by the racers, but also their competition stats. If you're interested in Bearcat racers, this is the guide to own. **SF**

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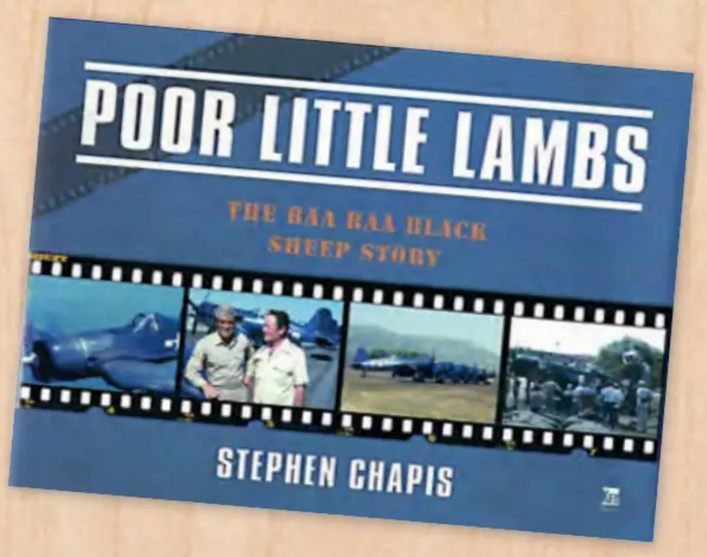

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4

Colors & Markings of the A-7 Corsair II Part 1

By: Mike Heideman and Rock Roszak
ISBN: 978-8-2668358-7-0 **Price:** $25.99
Pages: 127 **Format:** 280 x 219mm
Web: www.detailandscale.com

If you harbour the desire to build an A-7 Corsair II, but are short on suitable printed reference, the new softback from Detail & Scale offers a wealth of stunning imagery of what was politely nicknamed the SLUF... Short Little Ugly Fella. This volume focusses on US Navy Atlantic Fleet units, plus those concerned with test and evaluation, it's crammed with photos of US Navy A-7A/B/C/E Corsairs. The airframes wear both high-visibility Light Gull Gray and White, and the low-vis grey Tactical Paint Scheme (TPS). Anyone purchasing this new volume will hit a rich vein of photographic reference which, besides offering detailed captions with shots of the real aircraft, also educates on TPS and high-vis liveries with accompanying drawings and text. Another bonus is that many images show the particular effects of spot-spraying of panels as an anti-corrosion measure, plus the partial cleaning of grime on certain areas of the airframe. It's little details such as these that can instantly inspire a particular build project and ensure accuracy. The choice of units covered is wide too, starting with VA-12 and ending with VA-205, but also included are test airframes from outfits such as the Naval Air Test Center and Strike Aircraft test Directorate. And a valuable trait of the unit chapters, is showing how each squadron's décor changed over time. A great example is the set of six different photos of VA-37 'Bulls' Commander Air Group tail art. Ultimately, this is a handsome collection of photographs with plenty of textual detail to accompany them. **CC**

5

Axis Wings Volume 3

By: various authors
ISBN: 978-1-9993-1659-4 **Price:** £40
Pages: 184 **Format:** A4
Web: www.chandospublications.co.uk

If you favour Luftwaffe/Axis aircraft subjects for your modelling, the *Axis Wings* series from Chandos Publications is a multi-faceted reference source... now on its third volume. The subjects covered are: early Heinkel He 111 camouflage, Messerschmitt in the garage (Battle of Britain), Fw 190 Höhenjäger 2, Swedish Reggiane RE.2000, Funkmeßgerat 2, Lichtenstein S and Hohentwiel radars, Hornisse over England, Franz Birnbaum – Hs 129 pilot, He 177s of Kampfgeschwader 1, Alfred Partzsch and 1./NSGr.4, the British Enemy Aircraft Servicing and Storage Unit 1945-46 and the development of organised Luftwaffe research in Britain and the USA. Each topic is afforded a decent amount of space, while the text provides technical and operational perspectives, supported by drawings, colour artwork and a map. The Reggianne chapter will please those interested in Italian-built fighters; the Swedish service and markings making this an even more exotic theme. The feature on the Messerschmitt Me 410 and KG 2's intruder missions is especially engaging, with its wartime photo and combat accounts. If you're keen on the He 177, KG 1's employment of the type offers useful studies of structural nuances and markings. Builders who enjoy adding Allied markings to captured Axis aircraft have interesting photos to study in the book's look at the British Enemy Aircraft Servicing and Storage Unit. The *Photo Album* section offers pleasing variety too, with imagery of the Hs 129, Ju 352, Fw 198A-3, He 162A-2, Fw 190, Bf 109G-6, Arado 234B-2 and Ju 87G-2. Revealing narratives, worthy photos and colour artwork appear throughout this edition. **CC**

6

Poor Little Lambs: The Baa Baa Black Sheep Story

By: Stephen Chapis
ISBN: 978-1-80282-871-9 **Price:** £30
Pages: 207 **Format:** 303 x 220mm
Web: https://shop.keypublishing.com

It's not often an account of a TV series – especially a show that had such a troubled existence as *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, which recounted the story of Greg 'Pappy' Boyington's VMFA-2145 'Black Sheep' squadron during World War Two – crosses a modeller's desk. What makes *Poor Little Lambs* stand out is that it's packed with photos and colour profiles of F4U Corsairs, along with A6M Zeros, P-38 Lightnings, B-25 Mitchells and other types (some emulating Japanese opponents) that appeared in the two seasons of 1970s *Baa Baa Black Sheep*. The opening chapters set the scene for the creation of the TV series, due to the publication of famous US Marine Corps aviator Greg 'Pappy' Boyington, before listing all actors and aircraft types involved. There's an episode breakdown, highlighting both the challenges of depicting the subject aircraft – although warbird Corsairs appear to have been widely available. The author doesn't shy away from controversial aspects, though, including the depiction of wartime pilot behaviour... received poorly by audiences. Modellers are well served, though, with multiple full-colour profiles of the participating aircraft – principally Corsairs – including airframe histories, and the trials of using aircraft that had hardly flown in many years. Notable inclusions are two Harvards, converted to represent A6M Zeros, which appeared previously in *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and would subsequently serve as short-lived antagonists in *The Final Countdown*. Whether you're interested in famous aircraft or the aviation stars of the screen, this is a fascinating read. **SF**

ON THE SHELF

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Swordfish Units of World War 2

By: Matthew Willis
ISBN: 978-1-4728-6510-6 **Price:** £16.99
Pages: 96 **Format:** 184 x 248mm
Web: www.ospreypublishing.com

Few aircraft are so capable or reliable that they outlive their intended successors, yet the Fairey Swordfish – which was approaching obsolescence prior to World War Two – was such a design. This well-written history provides a fascinating insight on the type, but instead of the usual development elements, it covers just the operational aspects, so the narrative opens with the outbreak of World War Two and how the Swordfish was employed during those opening battles. Events are then described in chronological order, which means there are several transitions between theatres as the war unfolds. Perhaps understandably, almost a third of the pages are devoted to events in the Mediterranean theatre of operations, including such famous attacks such as Taranto Harbour, but Atlantic missions, including those against *Bismarck* and *Scharnhorst*, also receive a thorough examination. The author is to be commended for his balanced approach – it would be all too tempting to provide just the success stories, but the type's limitations are described, along with the effect this could have on operations. Modellers will be well served by the generous collection of archive photos plus 22 full-colour profiles of the type, featuring markings worn in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Far Eastern theatres and how the camouflage schemes changed as the war progressed. While the lack of technical information and the Swordfish's development may seem an oversight at first, it does give the author more space for the type's combat missions, making it an invaluable reference for modellers. **SF**

8

Kaman H-2 Seasprite

By: Wayne Mutza
ISBN: 978-0-7643-6933-9 **Price:** £40.99
Pages: 224 **Format:** 222 x 286mm
Web: https://gazellebookservices.co.uk/

Compared to the likes of the SH-3 Sea King, SH-60 Seahawk and even the Lynx, Kaman's SH-2 Seasprite has received little attention, with few references or kits of the type produced. The former oversight has just been filled magnificently thanks to this impressive tome on the type by Schiffer Military. It charts how the Seasprite morphed over the years from a basic US Navy search-and-rescue, utility and liaison helicopter into a credible anti-submarine warfare platform, equipped with dipping sonar and lightweight torpedoes, along the way gaining a second engine to counter reliability issues. It's not just the regular roles that receive attention, though, with a section covering how the H-2 was modified into a combat search-and-rescue 'gunship' and was even trialled with AIM-9 Sidewinder and AIM-7 Sparrow air-to-air missiles. While the lion's share of the pages are devoted to the type's US Navy service, including combat missions in Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, attention is also given to those airframes operated by Egypt, Australia, New Zealand, Poland and Peru. If you're looking for photographic inspiration of your build, it's here in spades, with plenty of full-airframe and close-up shots of the type, many of which haven't been seen in print before, and the informative captions provide both context and additional detail (including where there are doubts over a photo's authenticity). If you have a kit of the Seasprite, whether that's by Airfix, Clear Prop, Matchbox/Revell or Fujimi, then this is an absolute treasure trove of information and comes highly recommended. **SF**

9

Curtiss SB2C Helldiver

By: Kev Darling
ISBN: 978-1-916759-28-2 **Price:** £25
Pages: 114 **Format:** A4
Web: www.guidelinepublications.co.uk

Along with new 'standard' titles in its *Warpaint* series, Guideline has been releasing *Warpaint Specials* on specific types, with the seventh volume featuring the Curtiss Helldiver. It's a great introduction to the type, charting the dive-bomber's often troubled development and entry into US Navy service, where it replaced the Douglas SBD Dauntless, and the author captures the difficulties encountered by Curtiss when cramming so much equipment into an airframe. With almost 40 US squadrons operating the type, there's plenty of combat detail present, with chapters set aside for the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf actions, while the type's service in the US Marine Corps and foreign air arms is also recounted. While the extra pagination will be welcomed modellers, the early chapters do suffer from an imbalance between the narrative and photos, being heavily skewed in the former's favour, an issue that's eventually resolved in the final half. Although the perfect-binding, which limits the photo size due to the larger 'gutter', there's still room for a set of 1/72 plans to be included. The firm's current trend of gathering all of the profiles together in the final pages continues – for this volume there are 48 spread across eight pages, depicting predominantly US airframes, along with those in British, Portuguese Australian, Greek, French and Italian service. While it's a shame there's no longer any modelling information provided, this *Warpaint Special* offers an excellent insight into what eventually became the US Navy's premier dive bomber. **SF**

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1/48

ON THE SHELF

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1

AV-8B Harrier II (USMC Attacker)

By: Hasegawa **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: 00449 **Price**: £15.99
Web: www.amerang.co.uk

For several years, Japan's Hasegawa relied heavily on limited-edition boxings with new decals – but this was at the cost of 'standard' kits. Now, though, the famous manufacturer is reintroducing various older toolings to be sold in standard form as part of the firm's 'core' range. A good example is the recent reappearance of Hasegawa's 1/72 AV-8B Harrier II, in day attack format (without forward-looking infrared). A new tooling in 2000, this means fine, engraved panel lines are present throughout, along with integrally moulded formation light strips. Decals are supplied for instrument panel and side console features, but note the kit's ejection seat is a poor representation of the type's Stencil S-III-S, and would be best replaced with an aftermarket item. The kit comes on nine styrene runners, one of those being clear; stores comprise underwing fuel tanks and AIM-9L/M Sidewinders with LAU-7 rails, and you also get the type's underbelly GAU-12 gun system, with one pod holding the gun and the other housing the ammunition. It appears that 65% Leading Edge Route Extensions are present, as are Lift Improvement Device strakes as an alternative to the gun pods, but you also receive an air-refuelling probe moulded in the stowed position. The chaff/flare dispenser configuration is correct, with just two 'buckets' on the aircraft's underside, as is the early-style short intake at the base of the vertical fin. Decals for two low-visibility grey airframes are provided:

- BuNo 161584/03/WP, VMA-323 'Bulldogs'
- BuNo 163659/22/WH 'Flying Nightmares'

2

SIAI-Marchetti SF-260EA/D/EU 'Late Bulged Canopy Type'

By: Special Hobby **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: SH48215 **Price:** €26.20
Web: www.specialhobby.eu

Having released a 1/48 SIAI-Marchetti SF-260AM/M/W last year, Special Hobby has reworked the tooling to provide the SF-260EA/D/EU with bulged canopy. Compared with the earlier offering, the main two styrene runners are retained, and these are joined by a new frame for the larger, bulged canopy. Note, though, the runner holding underwing pylons and rocket pods isn't present in this iteration. All three of the instrument panels provided (with corresponding decals) are optional in this kit; additionally, different antenna fits depending on the variant/colour scheme being modelled. Special Hobby's cockpit is well detailed, with separate control columns, rudder pedal units and central console, while inserts are included for the sidewalls; seatbelts come in decal form. There are also five interesting and attractive colour schemes thanks to a new decal sheet, which also includes a wealth of airframe stencilling besides the main markings. Unsurprisingly, the liveries are, for the most part, high visibility in nature – reflecting trainers and aerobatic display aircraft. They are:

- SF-260EA, MM55126/70-35, 70° Stormo, Italian Air Force, Latina AFB, Italy, 2015
- SF-260D, 847/ST-47, 5 Sqn, Basic Flying Training School, Belgian AF, Beauvechain, 2015
- SF-260EU, 1248, Air Trg Gp 14 'Escorpiones', Primary Squadron 141 'Aguiluchos' Venezuelan AF, Boca del Rio, Venezuela, c2010
- SF-260EU, T-260/612, Uruguayan AF, General Artigas AFB, Pando Military Aviation Academy, Uruguay, c2010
- SF-260M+, ST-34+, Red Devils Aerobatic Display Team, 5 Sqn, Belgian AF, 2015

3

Do 217M-1

By: ICM **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 48274 **Price:** £69.80
Web: www.hobbyco.net

ICM has now modified its Do 217 tooling to provide a Do 217M-1, adding new fuselage halves and glazing, plus the type's DB 603A-1 inline engines. There are ten styrene runners in total and all the usual ICM moulding and detail traits are evident, there being fine and consistent panel line engraving and separate flying control surfaces. Cockpit features comprise well-rendered, separate sidewall inserts with raised and recessed moulding, plus a multi-piece pilot's seat, control yoke and instrument bank. Meanwhile, individual and well-equipped side consoles are supplied, as well as the bomb aimer and radio operator/gunner seats, which build from two and three parts, respectively. Both MG 81 and MG 81Z machine guns are supplied for alternative fits in the nose glazing. Extra strength for the wings is ensured by a sturdy spar; the bomb bay is impressively detailed, with a choice of SC 500 J and either SC 250 Ja or SD 250 Jb stores. Two complete powerplants with bearers are supplied and you can pose these fitted, but without the cowlings. The detail is good and worthy of mention is that all four airframes represented by the decals are nocturnal combatants, featuring exhaust flame dampeners. The undercarriage parts are well moulded and the legs have integral rubber oleo gaiter rendering. Wheel hub detail is reasonable too, but no weight effect on the tyres is incorporated. The schemes are:

- U5+ET, 9.KG 2, France, summer 1943
- U5+UK/White 2, 2./KG 2, Columiern, early 1944
- K7+LH, 1.(F)/Nacht, Kastrup, spring 1945
- K7+EK, 2.(F)/Nacht (presumably), Prague-Ruznye, Czechoslovakia, 1945

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F-16AM of Ukrainian Air Forces with PAG-14

By: ICM **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: 72145 **Price:** £24.99
Web: www.hobbyco.net

ICM has combined Hasegawa's 1/72 F-16A Plus with fresh parts and decals, with a diorama base. The extra components, held on a new runner, provide: TERMA Pylon Integrated Dispenser System with Missile Warning System (PIDS+ w/ MWS) underwing pylons, 'Bird slicer' identification friend or foe antennas, wing leading-edge 'beer can' Radar Warning Receivers, LAU-129 missile rails plus AIM-120B AMRAAM and AIM-9L/M Sidewinder air-to-air missiles. Representation of the PIDS+ MWS pylons is good, with chaff/flare ports being present, plus obvious sensors for the MWS. Also provided here is ICM's previous PAG-14 airfield plates set, providing 32 in total, so you can form your own realistic hardstanding or portion of runway. The plates have a finely moulded rendering of the cross-hatched texture seen on the real items, to promote better grip. Hasegawa's F-16, a 1980s product, is still a reasonable option, with exceptionally fine engraved panel lines and fasteners, and accurately, features the larger horizontal stabilisers of the Block 15 airframes onwards. The ACES II ejection seat is slightly basic, while decals are provided for the instrument panel and side consoles. Missing from this kit, though, are the prominent surface reinforcement plates added to Mid Life Update F-16s. Markings are supplied for airframes 80-3596 and 80-3599; both wear a three-tone low-visibility grey livery. Decal-wise, the markings are thin and glossy, although the yellow portions of the national insignia could arguably have been slightly brighter. Wing walkways, stencils, weapon stripes and other items are provided.

5

TT-1 Pinto 'US Navy Trainer'

By: Planet Models **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 287 **Price:** €62.30
Web: www.specialhobby.eu

Even diehard fans of US Navy aircraft may not be familiar with the TEMCO TT-1 Pinto, a new kit of which has been released by Special Hobby's boutique sub-brand, Planet Models. It comprises mostly cast resin parts, but the undercarriage components come in black 3D-printed resin, while the cockpit rudder pedals, control columns and other smaller details are in the same medium, but grey. Fine and consistent panel line and fastener engraving is employed throughout. The cockpit comprises a full-length floor with raised features, a front bulkhead, rear bulkhead and upper-rear decking piece, control columns and rudder pedals, plus detailed instrument panels with decals. You also receive reasonable renditions of the type's modified Douglas ejection seats, and these have separate face curtain and seat pan firing handles, plus integral harnesses. Thankfully, the one-piece wings have locating pins, but no alignment devices are on the fuselage halves, though. The combined canopy and windscreen is a commendably clear vacuum-formed item, two being supplied in case of mishap. Some of the best detail is evident on the undercarriage, which oozes the kind of crispness and fidelity that's now common with 3D-printing, with excellent wheel hubs. Planet Models' decal sheet is of good quality, the markings being thin and with gloss carrier film. The two US Navy airframes represented, both overall yellow machines with black anti-glare panels and black or silver leading edges, are:

- BuNo 144228, Lt David Winer, Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland, 1958
- BuNo 144234/404 2S, Saufley Field, Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, 1960

6

Thunderbolt P-47D-10RE Razorback

By: MiniArt **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 48030 **Price:** £57.99
Web: www.creativemodels.co.uk

A third iteration of MiniArt's splendid new 1/48 P-47D Razorback is now available, offering decals for three USAAF -10RE airframes. This is an 'Advanced' format boxing, so extra parts are supplied on new Runner E, with which to display open wing gun bays and pose the flaps in the lowered position, while fresh cowling panels allow the type's powerplant to be displayed if desired. With the remainder of the parts common to the 'Basic' releases, this means there's a wealth of interior detail on offer, from the well-appointed cockpit to the magnificent replica of the type's radial engine. Surface detail is rendered as fine engraved lines and fasteners, while the rivet detail is commendable for its neatness. There's also a top-notch selection of stores for the centreline and underwing pylons, comprising several styles and sizes of drop tank, optional rocket launchers and a choice of 1,000lb, 500lb and 250lb bombs. The same extensive photo-etched brass fret that's found in the previous boxings is present here, too, along with separate stencil decals. Markings-wise, there's the choice of three different USAAF Eighth Air Force machines, all clad in Olive Drab on the upper surfaces, with Neutral Gray on the undersides; all are 'named' and sport nose art:

- 42-75120/QP-F *Mike IV*, Maj Winslow M 'Mike' Sobanski, 334th Fighter Squadron, 4th Fighter Group, winter 1943-44
- 42-75125/LM-E *HAWKEYE*, Lt Thaddeus S Buszko, 62nd FS, 56th FG, spring 1944
- 42-75207/LM-C *Rozzie Geth/"BOSCH BUSTER"*, Lt Fred Christensen, 62nd FS, 56th FG, spring 1944

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7 Tornado GR.1 'Desert Storm'

By: Italeri **Scale:** 1/32
Item no: 2521 **Price:** £129.99
Web: www.hobbyco.net

Italeri's third large-scale 'Tonka' features RAF Operation Granby/Desert Storm airframes. It includes a new frame providing two examples of the UK 1,000lb Paveway II laser-guided bomb with requisite markings on the fresh decal sheet, but sadly no TIALD pod. All schemes wear the now famed 'desert pink', although modellers will need to check references as several wore multiple hues of this colour. Sadly, an error has crept in, because ZA491 was coded with a black 'N' during Operation Granby. The mistake may have occurred due to a possible code change later in 1991. Also, most Paveway II sorties flown by Tornados involved the carriage of three stores, but just two are provided in the box. You do receive the other important stores, though, these being the BOZ-107 chaff/flare pod and Sky Shadow electronic countermeasures pod, plus AIM-9L Sidewinders. As with the previous boxings, a photo-etched brass fret is included and this carries ejection seat harnesses, details for the instrument panels and covers for TV screens, along with embellishment for the thrust-reversers, among other items. And again, there's the facility to pose one of the engines outside of the airframe, on its own stand. The January 1991 airframes are:

- ZA447/EA *MiG EATER*, 20 Sqn, Tabuk Air Base, Saudi Arabia
- ZA465/FK *FOXY KILLER*, 16 Sqn, Tabuk Air Base, Saudi Arabia
- ZA491/GC *NIKKI/SNOOPY AIRWAYS*, 20 Sqn, Tabuk Air Base (option for '267' at RAF Brize Norton, August 1991)
- ZA475/P *Triffid Airways*, 15 Sqn, Muharraq Air Base, Bahrain

8 Fairey Battle Mk.I 'Bloodbath Over France'

By: Special Hobby **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: 72153 **Price:** €24.90
Web: www.specialhobby.eu

The new-tool 1/72 Fairey Battle Mk.I issued by Azur-FRROM last year has now been re-boxed by co-producer Special Hobby, which adds fresh RAF schemes in this 'Bloodbath Over France' packaging. Coming on three styrene runners plus a clear frame, this has pleasing detail for the scale, plus you can pose the gunner's canopy open if desired. Compared to previous boxings, the parts are unchanged, with different items selected from the frames. This means modellers can expect a fully detailed interior, even though the parts breakdown does make for tricky alignment in places – a slow approach is your ally here – with a surprising amount visible through the clear glazing. Regarding the latter, a mask set is vital for the greenhouse-style canopy, which can be posed with open/closed sections. The undercarriage is equally impressive, with the complex arrangement captured accurately. Surface detail is of the engraved type, and while the elevators and rudder are separate, the wing ailerons and landing flaps are moulded integrally with the rest of the mainplane. All airframes sport the standard Dark Earth and Dark Green over Night Black camouflage, with the options being:

- K9353/HA-J, 218 (Gold Coast) Sqn, Advanced Air Striking Force, Aubérive sur Suippes, France, May 1940
- L5502/QT-D, 142 Sqn, RAF Binbrook, Lincolnshire, UK, July 1942
- K9390/JN-I, 150 Sqn, Advanced Air Striking Force, Écury-sur-Coole, France, May 1940
- L5190/PH-P, 12 Sqn, Advanced Air Striking Force, Amifontaine, France, May 1940

9 Lockheed Martin F-35C Lightning II

By: Tamiya **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: 60794 **Price:** £39.99
Web: www.hobbyco.net

Tamiya has completed its collection of 1/72 F-35s with the carrier-capable C-variant, much as it did with the its 1/48 kits. The design philosophy for this variant mirrors the F-35A, as the only stores option is for external weapons – lacking a bomb bay – although these are limited to just the outer wing pylons and a centreline gunpod. Consequently, just two runners are common, these provide the intake trunking, cockpit interior (including a pilot figure), exhaust nozzle, main undercarriage bay and outboard wing pylons. The remaining five – four grey and one clear – are fresh for this boxing and replicate the F-35C differences accurately, from the longer wingspan to the arrestor hook housing, strengthened undercarriage and two-wheel nose gear and wing-fold mechanism. Detail is first-rate, with options for an open/closed canopy, raised/lowered wingtips and neutral/deflected flaps and leading-edge slats. All RAM-coatings are supplied in decal form and there are markings for six US Navy and Marine Corps schemes:

- 170091, 304/NF, VFA-147 'Argonauts', USN, MCAS Iwakuni, November 2024
- 170088, 410/NE, VFA-97 Warhawks, USN, USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70), March 2023
- 169600, 304/NJ, VFA-86 Sidewinders, USN, NAS Lemoore, June 2024
- 170106, 03/WL, VMFA-311 'Tomcats', USMC, MCAS Miramar, March 2024
- 169633, 300/NG, VMFA-314 'Black Knights', USMC, USS *Abraham Lincoln*, July 2022
- 170501, 01/DW, VMFA-251 'Thunderbolts', USMC, MCAS Cherry Point, December 2024

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889/25

ON THE SHELF

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1 German 3t Cargo Truck 3.6-36S Late Prod

By: MiniArt **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: 35459 **Price:** £52.99
Web: www.creativemodels.co.uk

MiniArt has continued to expand its range of Opel Blitz trucks with a late production cargo/troop-carrying iteration. It comprises 31 styrene runners, including a clear frame for the cab glazing and vehicle lights, plus a photo-etched (PE) brass fret. Most parts are common to earlier releases, but new runners supply items for the late production vehicles, such as engine bay sidewalls, altered exhaust pipes and different lights. Two frames provide a full tarpaulin cover for the cargo bed, allowing modellers to make this area open or enclosed as they choose. The detail is as you'd expect from MiniArt, with super chassis, powerplant and transmission, while the suspension units are a faithful replica of the type's leaf-spring arrangement. Note, there are different radiator grilles depending on which vehicle you build, plus there's also a choice of having raised/lowered side windows, and an open/closed bonnet (the panels opening in a 'winged/v-shape' configuration). Wheels are provided in MiniArt's 'layered' format, with a one-piece hub sandwiched between five tyre 'wafers', each with one row of tread. This maximises the tread detail, but is still easy enough to assemble. In its usual generous style, MiniArt includes markings for five vehicles; three German camouflaged machines plus an all-white ambulance and a single captured truck as used by the US Army. The choices are:

- 9. Panzer-Div, Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 86., Eastern Front, autumn 1944
- 4. Panzer Div, Gdynia, Poland, January 1945
- 6. Panzer Div, Czechoslovakia, spring 1945
- Medical unit, Western Front, spring 1945
- US Army unit, Austria, spring 1945

2 US Heavy Wrecker Ward Lafrance Model 1000 – Series 4

By: Thunder Model **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: 35012 **Price:** £59.95
Web: www.albionhobbies.com

Considering the Ward Lafrance heavy wrecker has been neglected by kit manufacturers, Thunder Model is going all out to single-handedly rectify this situation, with this being the fourth release (of at least six planned) to date. This boxing provides parts for a Series 4 machine, which featured a longer, curved crane jib and strengthened supports, among other changes. Six frames (including the transparent runner) are common to all of Thunder's wreckers, with the additions providing for the new crane and mount. There's also three photo-etched (PE) brass frets, plus lengths of thread and chain, acetate sheets for the windows and eight 3D-printed resin items, ensuring a comprehensive package. Fortunately, Thunder's instructions are well designed, with the different mediums colour-coded for ease of reference. The high parts count means there's a wealth of detail – making this suitable for the more experienced modeller – with highlights including the exquisite engine (which can be displayed thanks to optionally open panels) and transmission units, while the suspension is equally impressive, although arguably over-engineered in places. The cab is well-appointed, with a decent blend of styrene, PE and decals combining to make a convincing interior. The standout element – as with the other wreckers – is the rear-mounted crane, which comes with full cabling and chains and is arguably a kit in its own right. There are three markings schemes, all clad in overall Olive Drab; two are US Army machines, while the vehicle number suggests the third is a British Army wrecker.

3 Japanese M3 Stuart w/Crew

By: MiniArt **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: 35454 **Price:** £52.99
Web: www.creativemodels.co.uk

MiniArt's M3 has been a popular subject, which has allowed it to branch out with more unusual operators, such as these captured machines used by the Imperial Japanese Army. It's essentially an early-production vehicle (35412) with a new rear-hull stowage rack and figures from the firm's Japanese Tank Crew set (35128). This is a basic kit, so the tank has just 14 styrene runners, including a small clear frame. As such, interior fittings are limited (although MiniArt's aftermarket Continental engine set could be added), but still include full-length main gun, co-axial weapon and turret rotation controls. Two fresh runners supply the five figures, four of which will make great additions to the vehicle, with what may be the loader/gunner in the turret hatch, while the commander stands on the engine deck and possibly the assistant driver is reaching for tools on one of the track guards. The remaining crewman is seated, cleaning a bayonet. The final figure is something of an outlier, being what appears to be a guntō-wearing military policeman, posed as if either halting traffic or indicating it should move to the right. This is another great package from MiniArt, exploiting a new-tool armour subject with older (2012) figures. Four camouflaged Imperial Japanese Army machines are represented

- 9883, 3rd Coy, 7th Tk Regt, Manila, Philippines, May 1942
- 9835, 3rd Coy, 7th Tk Regt, Manila, Philippines, May 1942
- 7th Tk Regt (7th Sensha Rentai), Philippines, Manila, January 1945
- Tuguegarao, Luzon, Philippines, 1945

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Summer 2024, Ukrainian Infantry, Kursk Region

By: Master Box **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: MAS35247 **Price:** £32.99
Web: www.creativemodels.co.uk

Master Box's most recent boxing of the Buggy Mongoose light utility vehicle depicts the standard three-seat cargo carrying version, but this time accompanied by four figures: three Ukrainian Armed Forces and a civilian. The vehicle is as per previous iterations (they all share common runners, just a different selection of parts depending on the variant), being presented on two styrene frames – these are joined by five vinyl tyres. Detail and moulding is first-class, with no sign of blemishes or flash, and there's even an engine, although much of this will be hidden on the finished model. Care will be needed when removing the roll cage and camouflage net holder parts from the runner, as these are commendably fine... similar caution will be required for the steering armatures. The main departure from earlier versions is the inclusion of figures, and these have been tooled specifically for this release. As such, they are moulded beautifully, with convincing renderings of the uniforms, with their attendant creases and folds. Weapons include examples of AKM and FORT 221 rifles, along with ammunition pouches plus equipment, such as rucksacks, equipment pouches and hand-held radios. Two soldiers are portrayed sitting in the Mongoose, with a third standing, resting on the vehicle's roll-cage bars. Poses are convincing, as is the way they are carrying weapons and equipment. Similarly, the civilian figure, a male who is wielding a bag of shopping, looks realistic, and is clad in loose-fitting trousers, a T-shirt and a flat cap – this last item being common attire among Ukrainians. It's a great package, essentially providing a vignette in a box.

5

M19 Tank Transporter

By: Revell **Scale:** 1/76
Item no: 03364 **Price:** £13.99
Web: https://revell.com/en-uk

Released originally by Matchbox in 1979, this is the second time it has appeared in Revell packaging, but, other than the markings, the contents are unchanged. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the subject's size, this is one of the more involved small-scale kits produced by Matchbox, and – as with the other releases in this range – is essentially a ready vignette, due to the inclusion of a pre-moulded base. Revell has obviously taken good care of the moulds, as all parts (which come on three styrene runners) appear blemish-free, with no sign of flash. Considering the kit's age and scale, there's a commendable amount of detail present, from a representation of the transmission unit through to the multi-piece suspension and even a winch unit immediately behind the cab. While driver and assistant figures are included (the latter posed as if climbing in/out of the vehicle), the interior is understandably bare, with just a steering wheel and basic seats, it's more than acceptable in this scale. The prime-mover's cargo bed is left uncovered, although it should be straightforward to use PVA-soaked tissue paper as a tarpaulin. If you thought the tractor unit was good, then the trailer is just as impressive, with the multi-wheel bogie units replicated faithfully, and even the vehicle chocks are included... all it needs is another 1/76 vehicle to act as a suitable load. Markings are supplied for four vehicles:

- US Army, 10th Armored Division, France/Belgium, 1944
- British Army, Western Front, 1944-45
- Bundeswehr, West Germany, 1956
- Israeli Defence Forces, 7th Armed Brigade, up to mid-1970s

6

Studebaker US6-US

By: ICM **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: 35492 **Price:** £29.20
Web: www.hobbyco.net

Having released cargo, troop-carrying and even rocket-launching versions of the Studebaker US6 truck, ICM has recently opted for the fuel tanker variant. While the obvious changes, including the new load bed with twin fuel containers, are featured, there are several other nuances – notably the revised chassis frames – that wouldn't at first be apparent to the casual observer. Assembly-wise, it's as per previous offerings, so modellers must build the ladder-style chassis from separate beams and cross members – fortunately several are quite broad, which will allow for proper alignment. There's also a fully detailed engine and transmission, while the suspension is common to all of ICM's Studebakers, being a convincing replica of the leaf-spring units. Similarly, the cab interior is well appointed, with separate foot pedals, while the dashboard dials are a combination of raised features for the bezels, with decals for the faces. The tanker sections are just as impressive, starting with the all-new deck section, fuel container mounting structure and side-mounted equipment storage boxes... there's even a drainage pipe on the undersides. Four jerrycans are included as a bonus. Markings – including a full complement of warning labels in two styles – are supplied for two US Army vehicles, both being clad in overall Olive Drab. ICM provides paint codes for its own products, but note, several are inaccurate, so modellers may want to cross-check with the listing on the instructions' front page. All markings are well printed, with excellent tonal density on the wite sections, which should prevent any 'bleed-through' of underlying colours.

ON THE SHELF

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Citroën C4 WRC

By: Heller **Scale:** 1/24
Item no: 80756 **Price:** €29.99
Web: www.heller.fr

Heller's splendid Citroën C4 WRC makes a welcome return in a somewhat unusual – for a rally car, at least – livery. It's devoid of any sponsorship and appears to be almost road legal, with non-racing registration plates. Parts appear unchanged from the original release, comprising five styrene runners (including one for the glazing), a one-piece bodyshell and five solid vinyl tyres. The kerbside format is reflected in the low parts count, as there's no engine and the doors, bonnet and boot are moulded shut. A full-length undertray serves as a mount for the wheels, with the suspension arms and axles sandwiched between this one-piece item and the individual wheelarches. The interior reflects the full-size vehicle's spartan appearance, with just two bucket-style seats, with harnesses, in the correct five-point configuration, supplied in decal form. The fire extinguisher is moulded integrally with the floor component, while the roll cage is a well-designed four-piece construct. Just two digital readouts are included on the decal sheet, reflecting the type's minimalist instrumentation. Heller's approach to the glazing is slightly different to other manufacturers in that the one-piece windscreen and rear window are inserted frorm the inside, while the single-part side windows are attached from the outside, although this does allow the latter to be pre-painted. The single scheme depicts an overall white vehicle and Heller supplies all relevant trim in decal form, from the window edging through to the Citroën Racing logo on the radiator grille. All items are well printed, with excellent opacity.

2

BMW 320i BTCC 1996 Brands Hatch Winner

By: Beemax **Scale:** 1/24
Item no: BX24045 **Price:** £49.99
Web: www.hobbyco.net

This is a re-boxing of the Hobby NuNu BMW 320i kit, but using the parts for the earlier pre-1998 vehicle. Components are presented on nine styrene runners, of which seven are white, plus one each clear and chrome-plated; the former provides all glazing, while the latter items aren't used in this boxing. These are supplemented by a one-piece white bodyshell, a photo-etched metal set providing two hub covers (notably, these have no attachment points on the fret) for the rear wheels' four slim vinyl tyres, a frame with polycaps and a small piece of vinyl mesh to replicate the radiator grille. All parts are moulded crisply, with minimal seams present. In line with other NuNu/Beemax products, this is a kerbside kit, so doors, boot and bonnet are all moulded shut and there's just a minimal representation of the engine and drivetrain undersides (these are moulded integrally with the floorpan, although the bottom of the fuel tank is separate). The three markings schemes depict vehicles operated buy the BMW Team Schnitzer at the 1996 Brands Hatch British Touring Car Championship. These are race winner #22, driven by Joachin Winkelhock, plus #20 (Peter Cox) and #21 (Roberto Ravaglia). Compared to other touring car racers, the scheme is simple, with an overall white bodyshell. All sponsorship detail and race trim comes in decal form, easing painting greatly. Of note, a mask set is included for the glazing, but modellers will need to paint the black edging strips. All decals are printed beautifully, with excellent tonal register and opacity, plus there's minimal clear carrier film.

3

Scania 770S 4x2 Normal Roof 'Grey Cab'

By: Italeri **Scale:** 1/24
Item no: 3971 **Price:** £69.99
Web: www.hobbyco.net

Italeri's Scania 770S returns in 'grey cab' configuration and, in the usual Italeri fashion, it's a combination of parts from earlier kits. These range from the 1997 R144, though the European Wheels (2016), and S730 Highline 4x2 (2022), which means the standard of moulded detail varies across the nine styrene runners. The frame for the wheel hubs is chrome-plated, but it's a more modern rendering, so doesn't appear excessive. The styrene items are joined by a photo-etched metal fret for the radiator and vent grilles, six hollow vinyl tyres with a decent tread and a sheet of self-adhesive, chrome-plated stickers for the mirrors, Scania legend and front brightwork. The truck's hinged cab allows for the engine and transmission unit to be displayed if desired, and modellers may wish to add the fuel and electrical cabling (not supplied in the kit) for a more enhanced appearance. Similarly, the cab benefits from convincing seats, dashboard and foot pedals, while this release includes the seatbelts as PE items. Colour suggestions (shown on the box side panel) are overall silver and overall red; the former has a version of the Scania symbol, with its griffin head motif and legends for Scania Vabis, representing the original two firms, while the second has a simpler arrangement, with a section of the Scania griffin on the cab sides. Italeri supplies registration plates for 15 different nations, along with all of the vehicle's exterior trim and internal placards, several of which are located behind the hinged front radiator panel.

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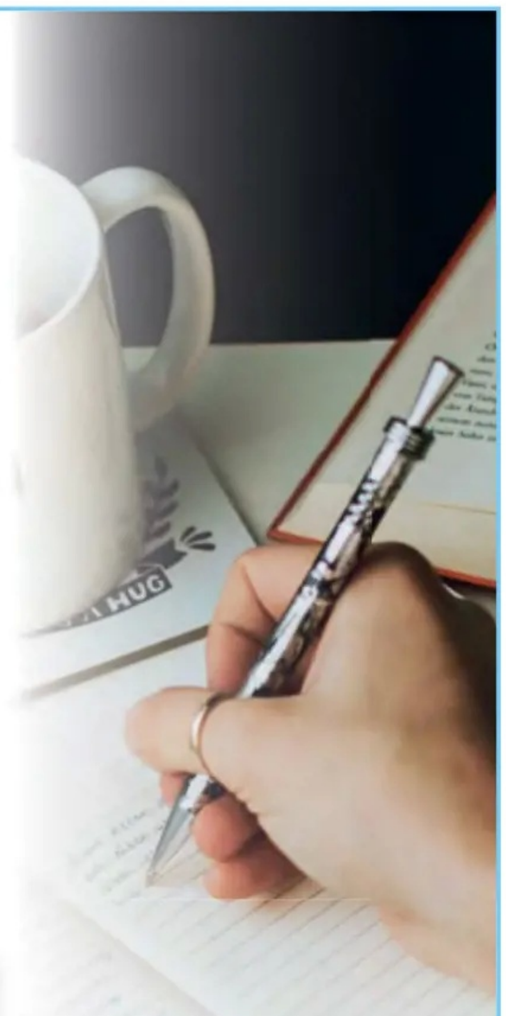

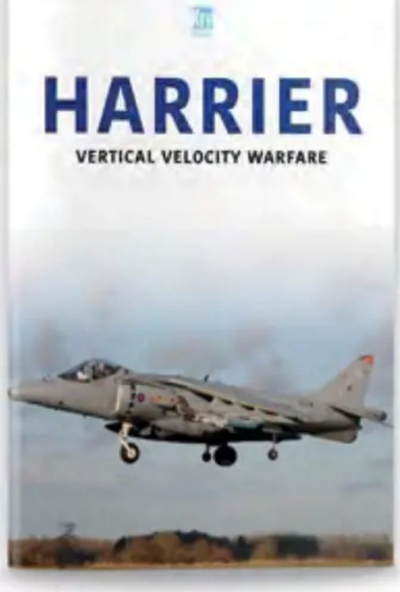

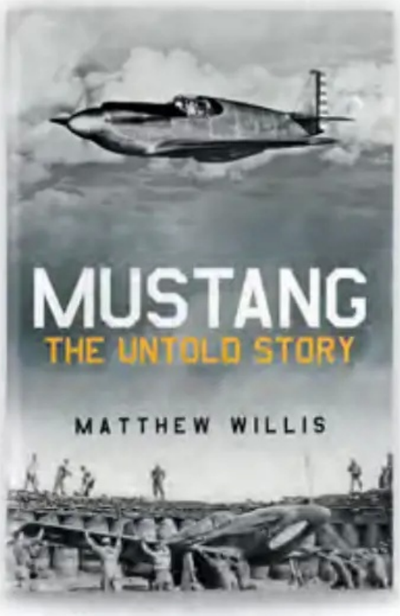

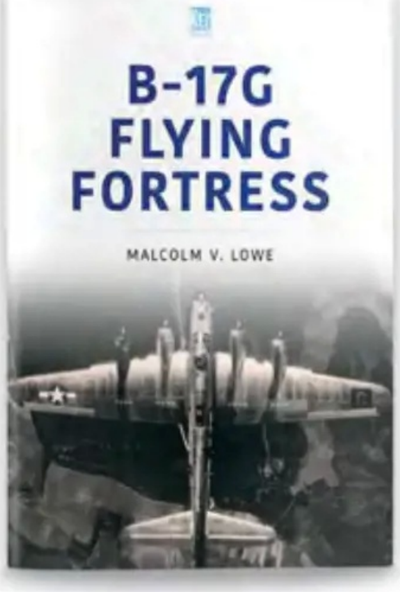

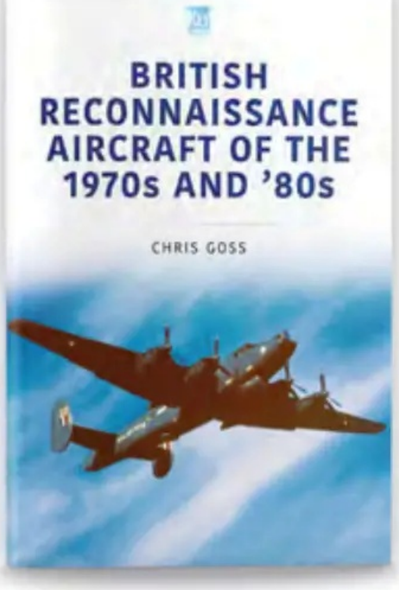

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1 Flower-class Corvette HMS *Begonia*, Short Forecastle

By: Black Cat Models **Scale:** 1/700
Item no: 700005a **Price:** €34.44
Web: www.blackcatmodels.eu

Having already produced several 1/350 kits depicting Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy Flower-class corvettes, maritime specialist Black Cat Models has downsized these offerings, with the release of the first 1/700 version. As with many products from this firm, it's a well-designed blend of 3D-printed resin items, accompanied by photo-etched (PE) brass accoutrements, plus turned metal mast and yardarm. It is presented as a waterline model, with the one-piece hull including the superstructure, gunwales, deck fittings and even spare depth-charges, engine deck vents (with hollow openings) and ready ammunition storage cabinets. Two printing plinths supply extra items, such as searchlights, paravanes, Vickers machine gun and 2-pdr 'pom-pom' positions, winches, windlass units, davits, main gun baseplate, mount and turret, plus lookout posts, Carley rafts, depth charge racks and K-launchers. Parts are clearly identified and colour coded to ease selection and assembly. Turning to the PE items (which are surprisingly few, as much of what is usually rendered in this media is now 3D-printed), these comprise the ship's railings (with integral fore and aft jacks), vertical and inclined ladders, plus lifeboat and life raft mounts. The single scheme depicts K66 HMS *Begonia* in standard early wartime camouflage of AP 507B Home Fleet Grey, with teak deck sections and a black boot line. Black Cat provides a generic decal sheet, with a mix of black and white numerals, which will allow the modeller to complete this kit as any of the early short-forecastle Flower-class vessels.

2 USS *Nautilus*

By: Revell **Scale:** 1/305
Item no: 051849090 **Price:** £16.99
Web: www.revell.com/en-uk

Re-released as a Revell Classics product, this appears to be a return of at least the 1982 'History Makers' boxing of USS *Nautilus*, itself a reworking of the firm's venerable 1950s kit. This iteration provided both a Regulus missile canister and launch platform – despite the fact this system was never mounted on USS *Nautilus* – plus representation of the vessel's bow torpedo tubes with open doors (previous versions had the doors moulded closed). Parts are supplied on three 'trees', and modellers will need to contend with the copious flash present on several items, notably the propeller shaft 'fins'. A one-piece stand, with the ship's name moulded in raised letters, is also supplied. When it comes to detail, it is as expected for a kit that has its origins in the 1950s, but the hull lines are engraved, and the free-flooding holes are recessed. The upper decking is represented as a 'stepped' surface with notable ejector-pin release marks, while the legend 'SSN-571' is represented as raised outline text on the conning tower – modellers should sand this and replace with the pennant number decal. Neat touches include the individual torpedoes to load into the tubes – these are supplied as an insert for the bow – and an insert for the conning tower with all of the ship's periscope, ESM, radio and radar antennas. Revell's Regulus missile comes as a two-part sub-assembly, which fits onto a lattice launch rail (also two pieces), being posed next to the missile canister. Markings are provided on a small decal sheet, including pennant number, name, plus glazed panels on the conning tower and submarine's bow.

3 Flower-class Corvette HMCS *Agassiz*, Short Forecastle

By: Black Cat Models **Scale:** 1/700
Item no: 700005b **Price:** €34.44
Web: www.blackcatmodels.eu

The second of Black Cat's small-scale Flower-class corvettes portrays the Royal Canadian Navy's HMCS *Agassiz*, which was built and launched in Canada, being employed frequently as an Atlantic convoy escort ship. While at first glance the resin parts may appear identical to those in the HMS *Begonia*, there are several subtle changes on the one-piece hull and superstructure, reflecting modifications to the form and configuration of this Canadian vessel, such as a different wheel house, railings instead of a metal gunwale around the bridge, stowage boxes immediately aft of this position and what appear to be boiler exhaust vents. Quality and refinement is first-class, with exquisite detail on the hull, while the funnel is hollow with an integral cap structure – all the more commendable in this small scale. The two plinths of extra 3D-printed parts are common to the firm's Flower-class kits, with different pieces used on each offering; here the modeller will use the depth-charge rails and launchers, 2-pdr weapon, paravanes and lifeboats/rafts. This appears to be an early vessel, given the relative lack of anti-aircraft armament compared to other examples. The photo-etched brass fret also has one or two differences, providing the additional railings noted on this particular vessel. As with Black Cat's HMS *Begonia*, *Agassiz* is depicted in an early-war camouflage scheme, with AP 507B Home Fleet Grey vertical surfaces and teak restricted to just the bridge area and lifeboat/raft mounts. The decal sheet is similar too, but has specific K129 hull numbers for *Agassiz*.

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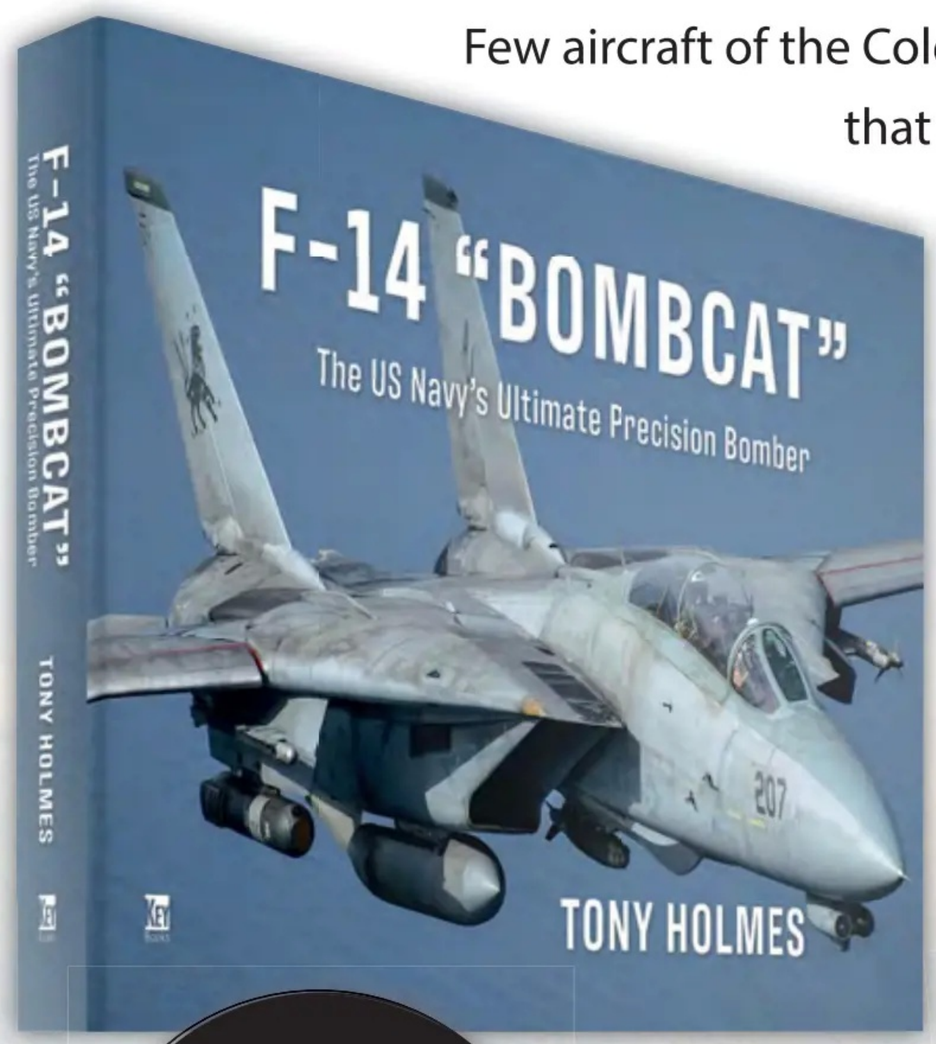

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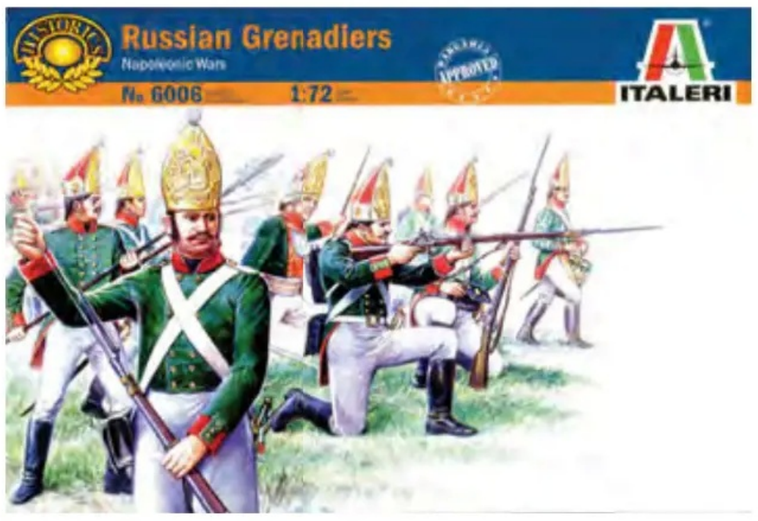
WWII RAF Ground Crew

By: ModelU **Scale:** Various
Item no: 50213 **Price:** See text
Web: www.modelu3d.co.uk

A trio of RAF World War Two groundcrew figures are now available from Modelu - ideal additions for a diorama. The first subject wears the No 1 uniform with a side cap and is posed consulting a clipboard, his finger obviously running down a list of some form. Next, we have a mechanic holding a wooden box by its side-mounted rope handles; he sports the standard overalls. Last, a similarly dressed colleague has the same type of wooden box hefted onto his shoulder. All three men wear wellington-style boots and shirts with neckties. The detail is good, there being reasonably engaging facial features. The set is available in all scales, priced as follows: 1/24 (£35.95), 1/48 (£21.49) and 1/72 (£13.49)



Russian Grenadiers Napoleonic Wars

By: Italeri **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: 6006 **Price:** £9.99
Web: www.hobbyco.net

Reissued under the brand's 'Historic' label, this set of 50 unpainted figures is also suitable for wargamers. There are two runners, each containing 25 figures, which are moulded in a semi-hard vinyl. There are multiple examples of most poses, comprising six each of soldiers marching, standing firing, kneeling firing, sentry/walking plus three each charging with fixed bayonet, standing reloading, kneeling reloading (three each of two styles), walking with a rifle held to port, and advancing with fixed bayonets, There is also an individual drummer, piper, officer, a soldier with his rifle butt resting on the ground and what appears to be a standard bearer. There is minimal flash present and the detail is sharp.

US Infantry Tank Riders Set 2

By: MiniArt **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: 53035 **Price:** £14.99
Web: www.creativemodels.co.uk

Here's a great addition to any European Theatre US Army tank, in the form of a section of US infantrymen. All are in various degrees of relaxation, from one perched on the vehicle's side to two kneeling/sitting (likely on the engine deck) and one who's almost prone, with just his shoulders and head resting against something (possibly the turret). This is typical MiniArt fare, with individual runners for each figure, plus a batch of frames for the weapons, helmets and equipment. All poses are realistic, as is the depiction of creased and well-worn uniforms. Suggested weapons include a BAR and M1 Garand rifles, although other options include M1 carbines (with/without a folding stock) and M3 'grease guns'.

Black Hawk Crew

By: ICM **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 48130 **Price:** £10.99
Web: www.hobbyco.net

ICM's Black Hawk kits lack crew figures, but this set provides a pair of pilots plus a loadmaster. There's just a single styrene runner, but the moulding is excellent, with the highlight being the pilots' heads, which feature convincing faces and faithful replicas of their flying helmets. The third crewman wears a full-face mask – often seen on loadmasters in the passenger/cargo area – and is posed leaning out of the open doors giving the thumbs up. There's arguably a higher parts count than expected as ICM has supplied the pouches (mainly for the loadmaster) separately. Neat touches include the hand-held flight-reference cards and chinstraps for the helmets (boom mikes will need scratch-building).

RAF Fighter Bomber Crew

By: ModelU **Scale:** Various
Item no: 50303 **Price:** See text
Web: www.modelu3d.co.uk

This 3D-printed resin figure set offers two aircrew members consulting a map that's draped over several ammunition boxes. With one standing and the other kneeling, both wear Mae West lifejackets and parachute harnesses, although the base unform differs, comprising a one-piece coverall and two-piece blue serge outfit, and just the kneeling figure is wearing headgear. Interestingly, the map has actual contour lines to add extra detail, while the scanning process ensures plenty of clothing folds/creases are replicated accurately. Facial features are reasonably good, too. Prices for the 1/48 and 1/72 sets are £15.49 and £11.95 respectively; other scales are available on the firm's website.

Kleine Feldküche Hf.14 with Crew

By: MiniArt **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: 53011 **Price:** £24.99
Web: www.creativemodels.co.uk

Having released catering figures and a field kitchen separately or as part of other kits, it's unsurprising that MiniArt has decided to release a set combining the two. There are four styrene runners for the field kitchen unit, along with a small photo-etched (PE) brass fret, which supply the trailer, oven, hotplate, chimney and lockboxes (for the cooked food). This is complemented by the figures: one is chopping wood for the stove (logs are included), another is stirring the food while a third tastes it. The final figure is carrying a goose, most likely for the next meal. Moulding quality is generally good, with the stove notably better than the figures, which suffer from flash.

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1

Artemis Space Launch System

By: CaDA **Scale:** 1/460
Item no: C56049W **Price**: £34.99
Web: www.hobbyco.net

It's not just scale model companies that have caught the Real Space 'itch' with the imminent launch of the first moon flight in five decades, as Chinese firm CaDA attests with this brick-type version. It's arguably more comprehensive than standard kits, as you get not just a launch pad, which serves as the base, but also the gantry and support arms, which turns this into a real display centre point. With 659 parts, its probably not a first-time brick-type set, but the simple diagrams and clear identification of parts – including 1:1 diagrams of longer parts to avoid any confusion – should put the Artemis within the scope of anyone from eight years upwards. If there is one downside to CaDA's brick sets, it's in the way the parts are packaged, with no correlation between the multiple bags and the assembly stages, so you will quickly have several opened to gain parts for the initial assembly stages. There's no need to worry about either self-adhesive stickers or decals, though, as all of the rocket's markings – including the complex patterns on the Solid Rocket Boosters – are pre-printed on the relevant parts. With the rocket and launch tower completed, there's one final neat touch, and that's an information board for the Artemis' maiden 25-day flight, which launched on November 16, 2022, from Cape Canaveral, Florida... splashing down in the Pacific Ocean off the Californian coast. This is a great introduction to space rockets, especially for youngsters, and its appeal will no doubt increase when Artemis II launches on or about February 5, 2026.

2

Star Wars: The Mandalorian Carson Teva's X-Wing Fighter

By: Revell **Scale:** 1/57
Item no: 06790 **Price:** £27.99
Web: https://revell.com/en-uk

Revell's snap-fix/easy kit X-Wing fighter makes its seventh appearance, this time with markings to depict the New Republic Starfighter Corps, T-65B airframe flown by Adelphi Ranger Capt Carson Teva, as depicted in Disney+ series The *Mandalorian*. Compared to previous boxings, the parts are unpainted, being moulded in a pale grey styrene, plus clear pieces for the windscreen and rear canopy glazing. There are seven runners in total, plus separate items for the pilot figure and R7 astromech (these are supplied in individual bags to prevent loss or damage). This is a great starter kit, as it can easily be built without the need for glue, while all markings and trim are supplied in decal form. Of note, decals are also provided for the Carson Teva figure and R7, with this attention to detail being a common theme in many of Revell's recent *Star Wars* kits, although their small nature and the complex surfaces may mean applying them is more challenging for younger modellers. For all that this kit *is* aimed at beginners, it's arguably one of the better classic X-Wing representations, with a decent level of detail, although some may consider the panel lines as being too heavy. The real highlight is the decal sheet, as there's everything you need, from the red unit markings to the tan-toned airframe sections, plus detail stencils, representation of intakes, exhausts and the coloured bands on the S-foil-mounted laser cannon. Unlike several recent Revell offerings, the markings are printed on matt carrier film, which may cause silvering issues, especially if the modeller chooses to paint their model.

3

Apocalypse Ver 2.0

By: Border Model **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: BC-003 **Price:** £64.99
Web: www.albionhobbies.com

Border Model's latest *Command and Conquer* subject is its second to feature the Soviet super-heavy Apocalypse tank. Many parts are shared with the original release of this type, although a number are unused (such as the latter's barrels and missile launcher units), and they are joined by fresh runners, allowing the modeller to depict the heavier gun and missile armament. Bonus items include a resin commander figure and a sound unit, to accompany the previous lights (which have their own pre-programmed circuit board). Modellers will need to add a pair of LR44 'button' batteries to power the lights. All parts are well moulded, though, and the detail is crisp, with no sign of flash or blemishes – the main gun barrels also benefit from hollow muzzles... a neat touch. There are even clear styrene vodka bottles to load in a stowage box, while the type's dual track units are workable, with the two-piece links being of the clip-together variety. The instructions are probably the kit's biggest failing, omitting guidance for either painting or decal placement, nor is there any mention of how the commander figure is assembled – or how the magnetic switch is installed. Similarly, there is a disconnect between the boxtop photos, which show a model with at least two examples of the hull/turret number, and the decal sheet, which has just a single item. If you're a fan of *Command and Conquer* or enjoy off-the-wall sci-fi armour, then this will definitely appeal, but you'll need a modicum of modelling experience due to the incomplete instructions.

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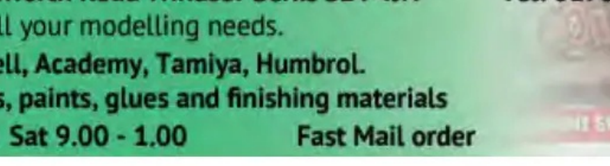

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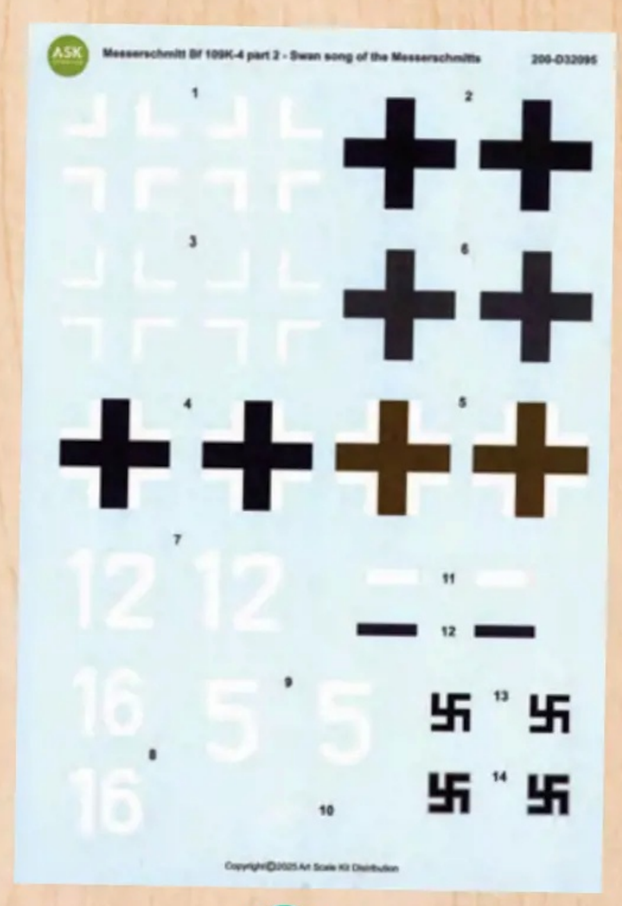

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1

SEPECAT Jaguar Collection Pt2

By: Xtradecal **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: X48255 **Price:** £9.99
Web: www.hannants.co.uk

Xtradecal's second collection of Jaguar decals is more cosmopolitan than the first, with markings for British, French, Ecuadorean, Indian, Nigerian and Omani airframes, offering several colourful and unusual schemes. Yet it does have a major omission in the instructions: decals are supplied for eight options, but just seven liveries are profiled. The missing scheme is for a French Air Force machine assigned to EC 2/7 'Argonne', which served as the type's Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) at St Dizier. Of note, there appears to be a discrepancy on the tail artwork – usually the artwork on each side of the tail was the same size, yet here the Greek archer insignia (1° Escadrille) is much smaller than that of the cockerel's head (2° Escadrille). That aside, the markings are excellent, with gloss carrier film, good register and strong tonal opacity, notably on the white and yellow sections. The choices are:

- Jaguar SN, NAF705, Nigerian Air Force, Nigeria, 1980s
- Jaguar GR.3, XZ103/FP, of 41(F) Sqn, RAF Coltishall, 2005
- Jaguar OS, 219, 20 Sqn, Royal Air Force of Oman, Thumrait, Oman, 2012
- Jaguar GR.1, XX737/GG, 54(F) Sqn, RAF Coltishall, 1982
- Jaguar IS, JS150, 14 Sqn, Indian Air Force, Ambala, India, late-1980s
- Jaguar ES, FAE 302, Escuadron de Combate 2111, Grupo 211, FAE, Taura, Ecuador, 1999
- Jaguar GR.1, XX767/17, 226 Operational Conversion Unit, RAF Lossiemouth, UK, 1977
- Jaguar A, A11/7-PT, EC 2/7 'Argonne', St Dizier, France

2

Messerschmitt Bf 109K-4 Part 2

By: ASK Distribution **Scale:** 1/32
Item no: D32095 **Price:** €12.29
Web: www.artscale.eu

Aftermarket brand ASK Distribution has issued the second part of its decal selection for Kōtare's new 1/32 Bf 109K-4, although these would be equally suitable for kits by Trunmpeter or Hasegawa. This kit of Messerschmitt's late-war fighter is a splendid rendering of the type, although modellers with Trumpeter's same-scale K-4 in their stash can also employ ASK's decals. Titled 'Swansong of the Messerschmitts', this single sheet offers markings for three airframes, all featuring differing camouflage colours and patterns. One airframe wears overall RLM 76 light blue with subtle and sporadic green mottle, while the other two employ late-war RLM 81 and 83 with RLM 75 and 76 and sport the so-called structural camouflage underneath, comprising bare-metal panels. Colour profiles and plan views of each airframe are provided, as are codes for Mr. Hobby, Mr. Color and MMP products. As is usual for this firm, the print quality is first-rate, with 'solid' and 'outline' Balkenkreuze insignia for the wings and fuselage (curiously, one pair is 'off-black', which would make for an unusual model), while two types of Swastika – unusually these are one-piece items – are included as well. Just the basic insignia, code numbers and Stab markings are provided, so all other airframe stencilling will need to come from either the base kit or a dedicated aftermarket stencil set. The options are:

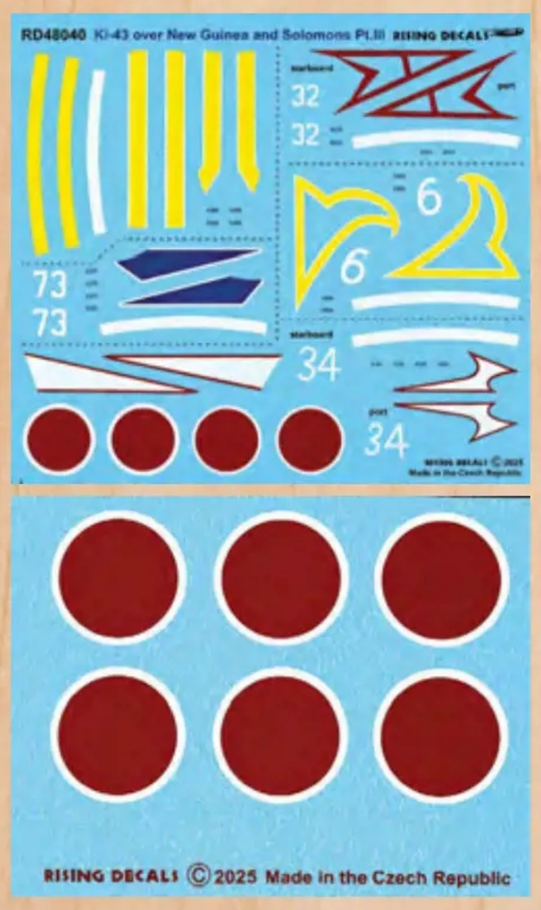
- White 12 + I *Emmy*, 9./JG 3, Pasewalk, March 1945
- White 16 + I, 9./JG 53, Lechfeld, May 1945
- White 5, I./JG 11, Leck, May 1945

3

Rafale C 4-GY 'Solo Display 2024)

By: Syhart Decal **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: 72-152 **Price:** €13
Web: www.syhartdecal.fr

If you're keen on French military jets or, more specifically, the Dassault Rafale, this recent high-quality decal set from Syhart may be of interest, as it supplies everything you need to recreate this striking display livery. Perhaps surprisingly, there is just a single accurate Rafale C in this scale, that coming from Hobby Boss, although it should (with care and possibly the trimming of several items) also work with Italeri's earlier offering. This splendid package supplies all necessary décor for the Rafale C airframe coded 4-GY, which was last year's French Air and Space Force Solo Display machine, flying in a classy, patriotic blue, white and red livery on both the upper and lower surfaces, punctuated by swathes of silver. There is a whole host of waterslide decals to apply, but Syhart's instructions are, thankfully, clear in their design and direction, offering not just placement guidance but also a suggested order of application. Masks are also supplied, but you'll need to do some of your own masking in setting the boundaries for the initial white portion on the upper airframe. Full airframe stencils (including low-voltage formation lights and chaff/flare dispenser covers) and national insignia are provided, while the decals have been produced in official accordance with the scheme's original designer, Régis 'Rage' Rocca. Syhart's usual standards are evident, there being good colour tones and strong opacity, while the decals themselves are thin and glossy. Note that the livery is also provided by Syhart in 1/48 scale, being suitable for kits by either Revell or Hobbyboss.



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4

Ki-43 over New Guinea and Solomons Pt.III

By: Rising Decals **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: RD48040 **Price:** £15.30
Web: www.risingdecals.com

Rising Decals' third instalment of 1/48 markings for Japanese Ki-43s over New Guinea and the Solomons offers five further interesting schemes. Three of these sport dark green over natural metal, although one also has an even darker green mottled patten. There are also two natural metal examples: one features just hints of dark green mottle, while the other has a supremely busy green and red-brown camouflage over the metal. The instructions offer excellent colour profiles, plans and scrap views as always, plus quotations for Mr. Color/Hobby paint codes. Also provided is information on the mis-designating of Ki-43 sub-types. Printed on home turf, these decals have impressively thin, gloss carrier film and good colour density. Pleasingly, all the airframes represented here have smart unit colour décor and this package offers a great selection of schemes if you're looking for alternative liveries. The choices are:

- Ki-43-II mid-production, White 73, 24th Sentai, Sentai Hombu (headquarters detachment), Alexishafen, 1944
- Ki-43-II mid-production, White 34, probably m/n 5134, 24th Sentai, 1st Chutai, Palembang/New Guinea, May 1943
- Ki-43-II late production, White 32, 63rd Sentai, 3rd Chutai, Hyane airfield, Los Negros, January 1944
- Ki-43-II late production, Chutaicho Capt Kobayashi Kenjiro, 59th Sentai, 3rd Chutai, But airbase, New Guinea, late 1943-early 1944
- Ki-43-II late production, White 6, 33rd Sentai, 3rd Chutai, Hollandia, April 1944

5

Italian Gustavs over Sicily #2

By: Exotic Decals **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 48026 **Price:** €10
Web: www.toromodel.com/pl

The Messerschmitt Bf 109 has always been a popular modelling subject, but occasionally it's good to veer away from Luftwaffe coverage and opt for something less obvious. Enter Exotic Decals' second collection of Bf 109G markings, depicting airframes with the Regia Aeronautica, which provides décor for three Bf 109G-6s. All are painted in RLM 74/75 on the tops of the wings, horizontal stabilisers and upper fuselage. The undersides have the standard RLM 76 light blue, while varying degrees of mottled camouflage adorn the fuselage sides of each machine. Yellow enlivens the under-nose panels of two of the Gustavs, while the third gains more interest with a black Spiralschnauze on the white propeller spinner. Two of the airframes are armed with 20mm cannon pods and tropical filters. Colour profiles and plan views are provided for each G-6, while the decals themselves are admirably thin and glossy, with the 'Diavolo Rossi' and 'Gigi Tre Osei' unit badges being well rendered. These markings are great for any 1/48 Bf 109G-6, but they'll be more useful if your chosen kit has the 'Kanonenboot' gun pods and tropical filter (although these are available in aftermarket form). The choices are:

- Bf 109G-6/R6/Trop, Wk Nr 18421/363-7, Tenente Udo Drago, 363a Squadriglia, 150° Gruppo, Sciacca, July 1943
- Bf 109G-6/R6/Trop, 365/15, 363a Squadriglia, 150° Gruppo Autonomo, Sciacca, July 1943
- Bf 109G-6, Wk Nr 18458/155/1, 155a Squadriglia, 3° Gruppo Autonomo, Comiso, July 1943

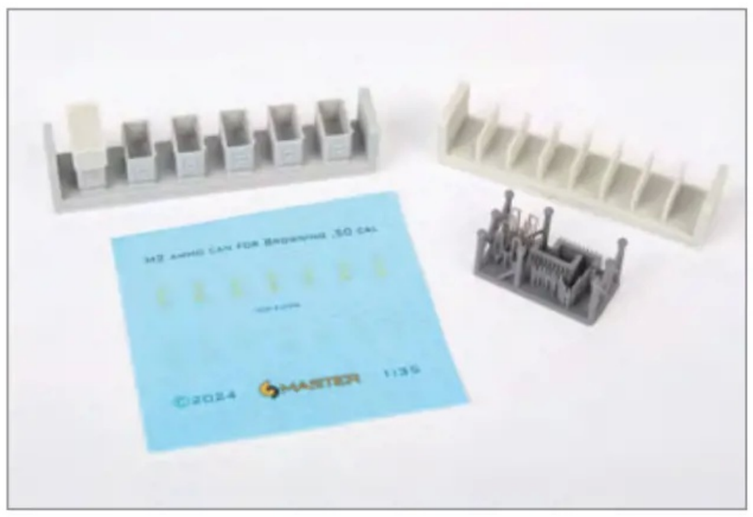
6

SEPECAT Jaguar Collection Pt3

By: Xtradecal **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: X48256 **Price:** £9.99
Web: www.hannants.co.uk

Xtradecal's third and last (for now at least) Jaguar collection offers markings for six airframes, five being RAF machines and the sixth being a French example. The latter is depicted as it appeared in Opération Daguet, the French contribution to Desert Storm, and this is joined by a Desert Pink Operation Granby Jaguar. As with previous sheets from this firm, there are several minor mistakes, including incorrect designation, so modellers are advised to check references regarding this and any associated airframe changes as a result. One other consideration is that you'll need the old Heller Jaguar A or Kinetic's kit for the French Jaguar, as these will supply the relevant stencilling and weapons pylons (the latter are a different design to those used on RAF airframes). Two schemes appear to depict aircraft marked for exercises. Colours and opacity are excellent on all markings, with the lion rampant of 54 (F) Squadron being a standout item, with well-rendered fleur-de-lys on this large artwork for the unit's closing ceremony in 2005. The six schemes are:

- Jaguar GR.3, XZ112/GA, 54(F) Squadron, RAF Coltishall, 2005
- Jaguar A, 11-RJ/A135, Escuadron de Chasse 3/11 'Corse', Opération Daguet, Armée de l'Aire, Al Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, 1991
- Jaguar GR.1, XX746/BD, 17 Squadron, RAF Brüggen, West Germany, 1984
- Jaguar GR.1A, XZ369/EF, 6 Squadron, RAF Lossiemouth, 1991
- Jaguar GR.1A, XZ364/Q Sadman, Thumrait (Oman) and Muharraq (Bahrain), 1991
- Jaguar GR.1, XX968/DB/B, RAF Brüggen, West Germany, 1980



M2 Ammo Cans (Opened)

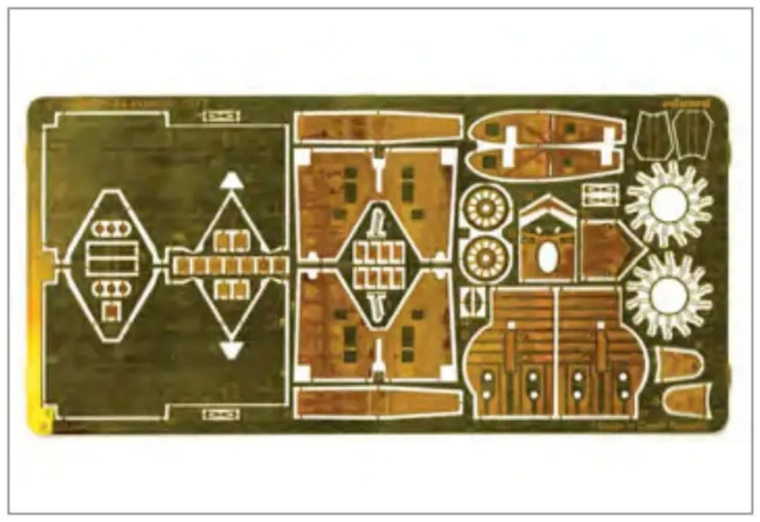
By: Master Model **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: GM-35-067 **Price:** £10.90
Web: www.master-model.pl

This well-designed resin accessory provides six empty ammunition containers for .50 cal rounds, with separate lids and locking handles, plus lengths of belted ammunition (those last two items are 3D-printed, the remainder being cast conventionally). Also offered is a resin template piece, which is inserted into the containers while they are being cut from the casting blocks to avoid any distortion or damage to the thin (to scale) side panels. Rendering of the hinges and locking arrangement is excellent and better than anything you could find in styrene. Also supplied is a decal sheet carrying alternative forms of stencilling, although modellers will need to check references for the box colours.

GRU-7A Ejection Seats for F-14A/B Late – with seatbelts

By: Art Scale Distribution **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: A48058 **Price:** €16.38
Web: www.artscale.eu

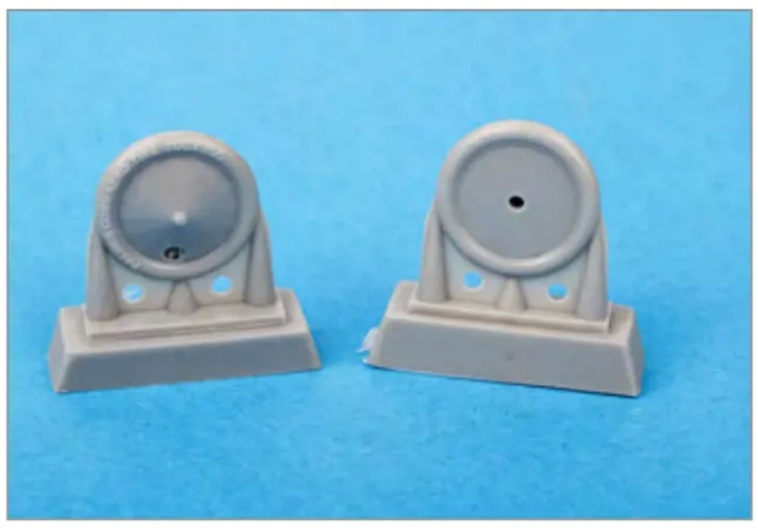
Fans of the F-14 Tomcat will appreciate this resin aftermarket GRU-7A seat set. The two examples are in the later format, with smooth posterior and seat padding. These seats are suitable for the F-14A and B variants (the Ds use the successor NACES/Mk.14 seats), and have harnesses printed in situ. No donor kits are suggested, but they'll surely enliven suitable Tomcats by Tamiya, Academy, Hasegawa, Great Wall Hobby and others. Note that the seat pan firing handles on these GRU-7s are printed in situ, while the face-curtain handles are separate. Earlier style seats are available separately in A48042.



PBY-5A Exterior

By: Eduard **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: 72731 **Price:** £12.45
Web: www.eduard.com

This plain photo-etched brass set is designed to improve the external appearance of Academy's 1/72 PBY-5A Catalina (the amphibious version). Liners are supplied for the undercarriage bay interiors and wingtip float mechanism, and while these will be an upgrade compared to the basic styrene, they will require any moulded detail to be removed before they can be attached. Other goodies include windscreen wipers for the cockpit, electrical cables for the engines and replacement scissor links for the mainwheel undercarriage legs. There are also panels for the wingtip floats. Note, interior detail is available separately with either SS806 or 73806.



SE.5a Wheels Correction Set

By: CMK **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: Q48280 **Price:** €6
Web: www.cmkkits.com

This set of two conventionally cast resin wheels is designed to complement any quarter-scale SE.5a, from the Aurora/Monogram kit through to Eduard's recent example. They are intended as drop-in replacements for the styrene parts, although modellers may have to widen the axle opening depending on which kit they are using, as the size varies considerably. While this wheel – which comes in covered-hub form – is fairly basic (as on the real item) there are several neat touches, from the tyre manufacturer legend to the sectioned outer hub plate. Regardless of which kit you're building, these are sure to add an extra touch of refinement.

P-40 Seat with Integral Belts Type 1

By: Eduard **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: 6481064 **Price:** £2.63
Web: www.eduard.com

This 3D-printed resin set from Eduard provides one example of the earlier, rounded-top seat as seen in P-40s, complete with integral straps. Compared to the kit's styrene version, the sides and rear panel are much thinner and the rounded 'lip' is more convincing, while the recessed bolts and backing strips are rendered crisply. Preparation should be minimal, thanks to the commendably fine attachment pegs between the part and printing plinth, requiring perhaps just one or two swipes with a fine sanding stick to remove any residue. They will just drop into the space occupied by the kit seat.

MB Type 9B Mk.3 Ejection Seat - with seatbelts

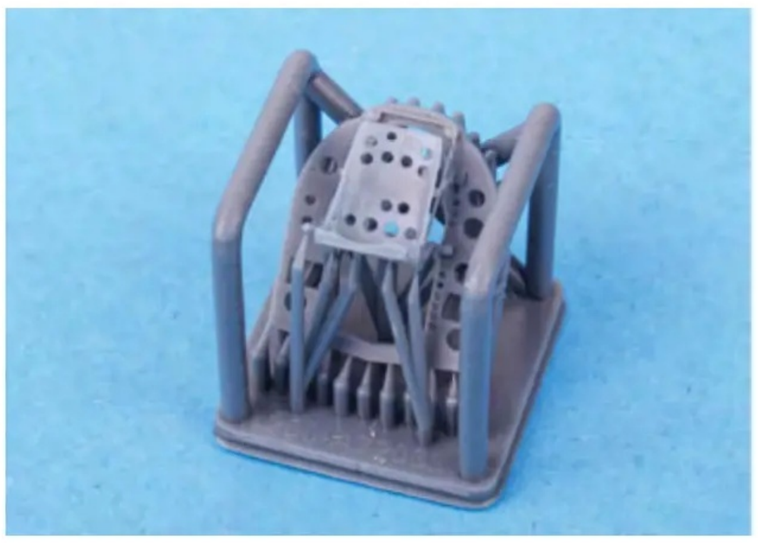
By: Art Scale Distribution **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 48058 **Price:** €8.17
Web: www.artscale.eu

If you plan to build Airfix's new 1/48 Jaguar or the older products by Airfix/Heller and/or Kitty Hawk, ASK's Martin-Baker 9B Mk.3 seats are arguably a must if you're looking to elevate the detail on your model. This set supplies a single example of the Mk.3 seat, which was fitted to RAF Jaguars from approximately 1990 onwards, and features a 'box-style' headrest with integral harness (if you're using a pilot figure then 48059 comes without the straps) and leg restraints. The detail is exquisite, from the strap material texture. through to the convincing seat rivets and fittings. These will make a notable difference to any Jaguar build.

MiG-21F Exhaust Nozzle

By: Eduard **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 6481149 **Price:** £10.31
Web: www.eduard.com

While the styrene exhaust in Eduard's new-tool MiG-21F will be more than sufficient for most modellers, given it's excellent detail, those seeking greater refinement may wish to consider the firm's 3D-printed resin alternative. These superbly replicated components feature much finer edges, along with a far superior rendering of the flameholder unit. With just six components, it appears straightforward to assemble and should require minimal neatening once the parts have been separated from their individual printing plinths. The inclusion of a bulkhead with integral fan blades means it's a drop-in replacement, with superglue needed to join the pieces.



A6M Bulkhead with Seat in Middle Position

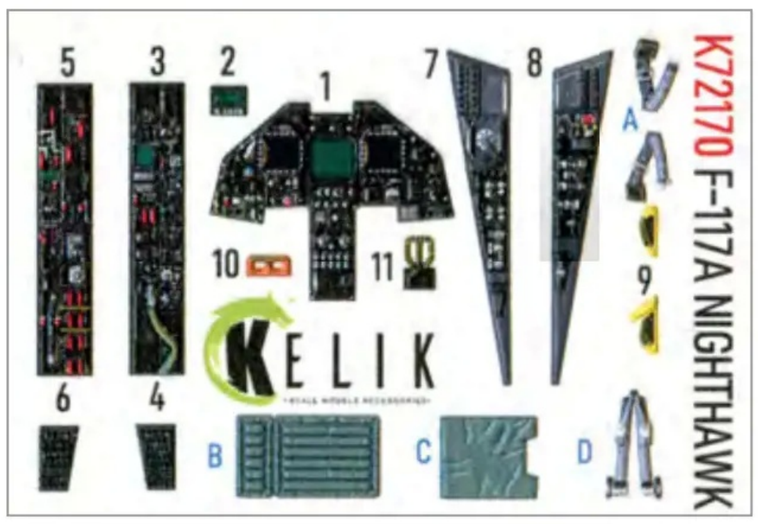
By: ASK Distribution **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: A72033 **Price:** €8.03
Web: www.artscale.eu

Tamiya's A6M Zero kits are regarded highly for their detail, but one aspect that can easily be upgraded concerns the seat – the styrene item is solid, with depressions to replicate the lightening holes, while ASK's upgrade has them as proper circular openings. This version has the seat in the middle position (upper/lower configurations are available separately), but that's not all, as the seat attachments and associated bulkhead are also included, making this a drop-in replacement. The bulkhead itself is much thinner, while the seat attachments are scale-accurate, comprising a delicately rendered tubular framework.

H39 Hotchkiss Detail Set

By: BSK Model **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: BSKD35026 **Price:** £12.90
Web: https://wildcatsmodels.com

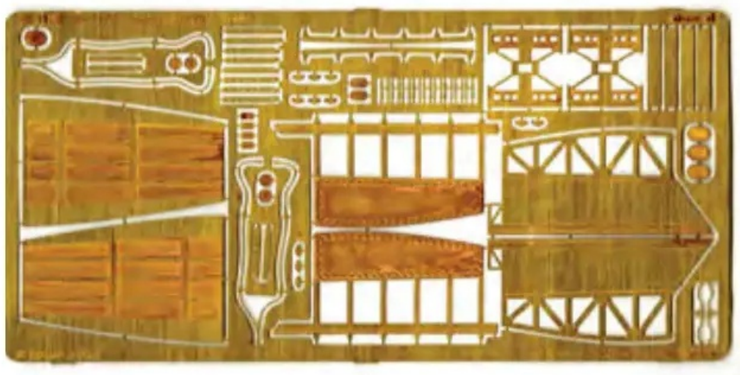
Here's a great upgrade for your Tamiya 1/35 H39 Hotchkiss light tank, in the shape of a 3D-printed resin set for the model's exterior. There are two finely detailed plinths – the first has just a single part, this being a replacement stowage rack, while the second has items such as a new jack base plate, plus track guard brackets, tool clasps, driver's hatch hinge bolts, hull grab handles and a rearview mirror. No instructions are provided in the pack, instead they are downloadable using a QR code on the packaging, which takes you to BSK's website. All parts are thinner and more refined than the kit items. Note, BSK Model products are available in the UK from Wildcats Models.



F-117A Nighthawk Interior

By: Kelik **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: K72170 **Price:** $12.20
Web: https://reskit-models.com

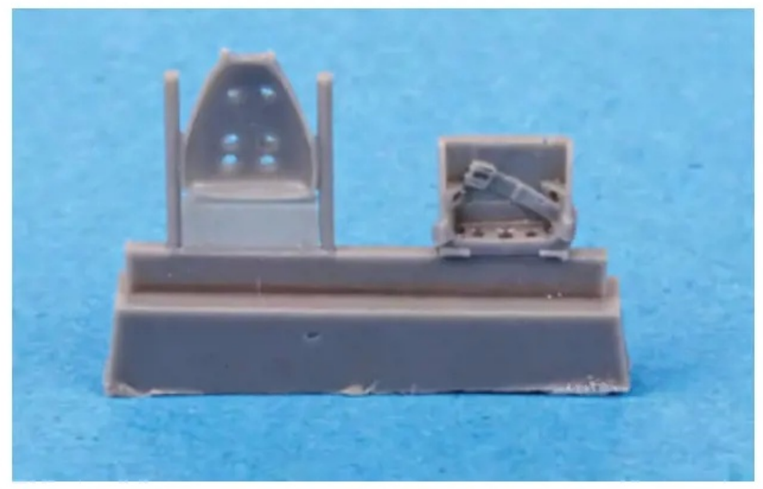
If you're looking for an upgrade to your Hasegawa 1/72 F-117A (which has recently been reissued in the UK via importer Amerang), then Kelik's 3D-printed decals are ideal. While the instrument panel and side consoles might be expected, this set also includes markings for the cockpit's sidewall panels, plus sejection seat straps and a firing handle. The result is a comprehensive revamp of the kit's spacious cockpit. Once the instrument panel's moulded detail is removed (the other surfaces are flat) and the interior painted Dark Gull Gray, it will just be a case of soaking the decals in water and attaching them with PVA adhesive



Do 217K Undercarriage

By: Eduard **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 481169 **Price:** £12.43
Web: www.eduard.com

Despite being a recent release, ICM's 1/48 Dornier Do 217K is already the recipient of Eduard 'goodies', with this set providing the kit's main undercarriage bays. Compared to the moulded styrene detail, the photo-etched (PE) brass items provide for a more convincing structure, capturing the T-shape of the framework accurately, but unfortunately little will be seen. There's also the need to remove the moulded features before the PE can be added. One aspect missing from the kit – the undercarriage bay 'ceilings' – is provided here, and there's a much improved rear bulkhead, replicating the correct open structure (the kit part is solid).



Ki-43-II Hayabusa Pilot's Seat with Harness

By: CMK **Scale:** 1/72
Item no: Q72332 **Price:** €3.30
Web: www.cmkkits.com

Hasegawa's 1/72 Ki-43-II Hayabusa has been around for more than 40 years, so while the detail is good for its time (although the cockpit is basic compared more modern products) it's a worthy recipient of aftermarket upgrades. This resin set provides a replacement seat and mounting rods. As with the kit item, it's a two-part sub-unit, but there the similarity ends, as lightening holes are open, the edges and sides are much closer to proper scale thicknesses and the lap straps are cast integrally with the lower 'bucket' section. Care will be needed when removing the supports from the casting block as the gap between them is filled with flash.

MB Type 9B Mk.2 Ejection Seat - with seatbelts

By: Art Scale Distribution **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 48060 **Price:** €8.17
Web: www.artscale.eu

Modellers building an early (pre-1990) RAF Jaguar GR.1/GR.1a and wanting a more detailed Martin-Baker Mk.9 Mk.2 seat (which featured the original 'scalloped' headbox pad) may wish to consider this 3D-printed resin version from ASK. As with the later seat (see p140), this is a one-piece item, complete with seat-pan firing handle, leg restraints and a superbly rendered harness. This last item is arguably the highlight, being far superior to photo-etched metal versions and capturing the heavy weave of this material. If you're intending to use the crew figure, then set 48061 provides the seat without a harness.

Hawker Sea Hurricane Mk.IIc

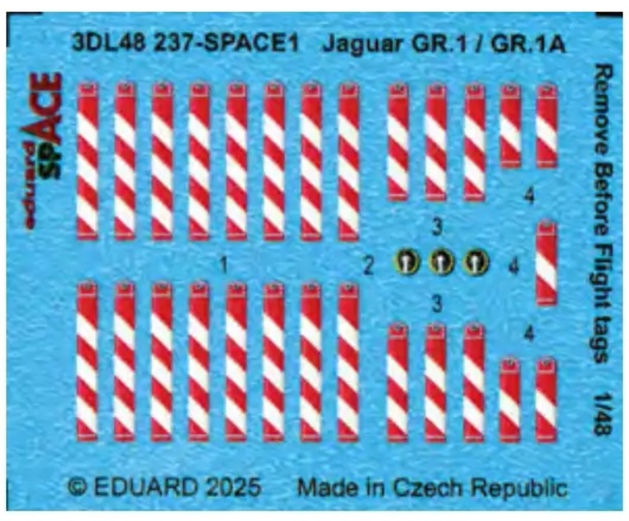
By: 1ManArmy **Scale:** 1/32
Item no: 32DET048 **Price:** £27.40
Web: www.1manarmy.be

Laser-printed, self-adhesive airframe stencils offer the modeller the opportunity to vary appearance using different paint colours, making these markings not only more convincing (instead of the stark black often offered on decal sheets) but also being – literally – 'painted on' to the model. Belgian firm 1ManArmy has gained an excellent reputation for its products, which capture all airframe labelling in an easy-to-use form. One its most recent sets is for the new Revell 1/32 Hawker Sea Hurricane Mk.IIc. Bonus items include roundels and fin flashes, plus airframe codes and serials. This set is available from Hannants in the UK.

Tool Set 2

By: MiniArt **Scale:** 1/35
Item no: 35671 **Price:** £15.99
Web: www.creativemodels.co.uk

MiniArt's second batch of tools and garage equipment adds even more choice for those wanting to replicate a maintenance/workshop scene. It comprises five styrene runners plus a small photo-etched (PE) brass fret, and offers a selections of items, including an anvil, vehicle jack, several styles of saw, a mattock, shovels, spades, spanners, hammers and handaxes. More complex tools are also provided, such as a lubricant pump plus wooden and metal toolboxes; the last of these have an option of open/closed lids with space for smaller tools inside. Finishing touches are provided by a decal sheet, with branding for the grease barrel and stencils for the toolboxes.



Jaguar GR.1/GR.1A Remove Before Flight Tags SPACE

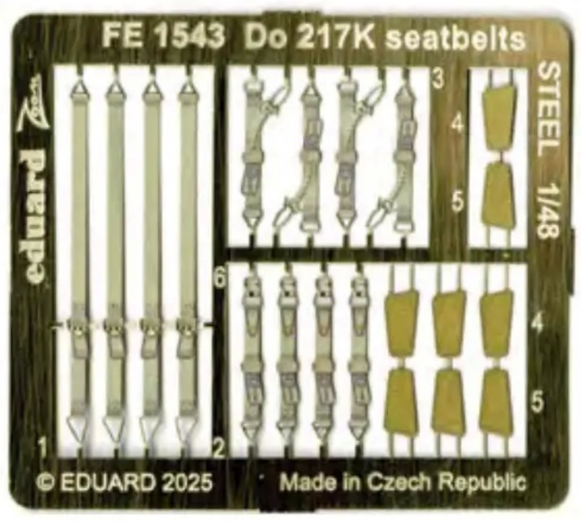
By: Eduard **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 3DL48237 **Price:** £3.30
Web: www.eduard.com

When parked, military aircraft are often festooned with Remove Before Flight tags, high-visibility safety ribbon, attached to blanking plates, covers and safety pins (for the likes of explosive-release units and armament). This set comprises 27 tags in three different lengths, designed for use with Airfix's Jaguar, but equally suitable for other kits of this type. They depict the RAF style of tag, with red/white stripes and – although not immediately apparent – these are double-sided. Modellers will need to drill a 0.3mm hole in the top of each tag and insert a piece of wire to attach it to the model.

AV-8B SJU-4 Election Seat

By: Rockit Studio **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: 480302 **Price:** £17.99
Web: Rockit Studio (Facebook)

While UMa's 1/48 AV-8B Harrier II Plus was generally well received, it does suffer from several accuracy issues, including the seat, which depicts an RAF Martin-Baker Mk.12, rather than the correct STENCIL S-III-S/SJU-4 item used in US Marine Corps airframes. This five-piece 3D-printed resin set supplies a beautifully detailed SJU-4 seat plus a replacement bulkhead suitable for a US airframe, makin gthis essentially a drip-in item. While the firing handle is printed integrally with the seat, the lower cushion and straps are separate (a spare of the last of these is included, just in case). This set is available from Hannants in the UK.



Do 217K seatbelts STEEL

By: Eduard **Scale:** 1/48
Item no: FE1543 **Price:** £6.74
Web: www.eduard.com

If you're looking for a straightforward way of improving the cockpit of your ICM 1/48 Do 217K, these photo-etched metal seatbelts are well worth considering. There are sufficient parts for all four seats in the kit's capacious cockpit and, being pre-coloured, there's no need for painting. Both the pilot's and gunner's seats benefit from shoulder and lap straps, while the bombardier and radio operator/navigator seats have just the latter. Note, the lap straps also have pads beneath the latches, as on the real belts. Superglue will be needed to attach them to the kit seats and they will require careful folding and/or bending to fit – the paint covering is quite delicate, though.

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1039/25

2026 EVENTS

As it's the first issue of the year, we thought we'd give you a heads-up on all UK-based shows currently planned for 2026. Those marked with an * are yet to be confirmed at the time this issue went to press. Full details will be published in forthcoming *Show Guides*.

January

25	IPMS Bolton Model Show
25	South Wales Modellers Show

February

14	Morecambe Model Show
15	Shuttleworth Scale Model Exhibition
21	East Anglia Model Show (IPMS Ipswich)
22	Universal Model Show (South Cheshire MMC)
*	Southwest Model Show (The Tank Museum)

March

1	Peterborough Scale Model Show
7	Aldingbourne Modelex
8	Wakefield Open Model Show
21	Space-Crafts Model Show
29	Blue Lamp Model Expo
*	Leeds Model Show

April

11	Poole Vikings Scale Model Exhibition
12	Yeovil Model Show
12	East Midlands Show
18-29	Scottish National Scale Model Show
25	Southdowns Model Show
25-26	Model World LIVE
*	Welling Model Show

May

3	IPMS Gloucester Model Show
9	Mildenhall Model Fair 2026
23	Sword & Lance (Darlington MMS)
30	IPMS Salisbury Scale Model Show
31	Tangmere Scale Model Show

June

7	Northern Model Show
13	East-Neuk of Fife Scale Model Show
13	Shepway Military Modelling Society Model Show - 2026
13	Twenot Show
13-14	Warsaw Model Show Babaryba 2026
14	West Anglia Scale Model Show
21	MAFVA Nationals
28	Shropshire Scale Model Expo 2026
28	Coventry & Warwickshire IPMS Show
*	Figure World North
*	Barry War Museum Model Show

July

4	Scale Model South Show (Hailsham & District)
11	Day of the Gundam
12	North Somerset Scale Model Show
19	Romsey Scale Model Show
25	IPMS Plymouth Model Show
26	BDAC Model Show
*	Saltash Model Show
*	Dundee Model Show
*	Essex Modellers' Show
*	Faversham Military Modelling Group Show

August

2	IPMS Avon Scale Model and Wargaming Exhibition
16	North Devon Model Show
22	Aberdeen Scale Model Show
30	Stoke-on-Trent Model Club Model Show
*	West Cornwall Model Show

September

5	Scale Scotland 2026
12-13	Southwest Model Show (The Tank Museum)
19	IPMS Farnborough ModelFest
20	Wings & Things (Fenland & Spalding)
20	IPMS Keighley 'Edition VI'
27	St Ives Model Show (IPMS Brampton)
*	IPMS Chiltern Show
*	Medway Model Show

October

3	Abingdon IPMS Model Show
3-4	Paprykarz 2026
18	Lincoln Scale Model Show
24	Nitra Model 2026 (Modelársky Klub Zobor)
*	Highland Scale Model Show
*	REME Museum Model Show
*	Letchworth Scale Model Show
*	Yeovil Model Show

November

7-8	Scale ModelWorld 2026
*	Army Flying Museum Show

December

*	Midland Air Museum Winter Model Show
*	Bugle Call (Bristol BMSS)
*	London Plastic Modelling Show

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Miracle on the Vistula | Paul McHugh

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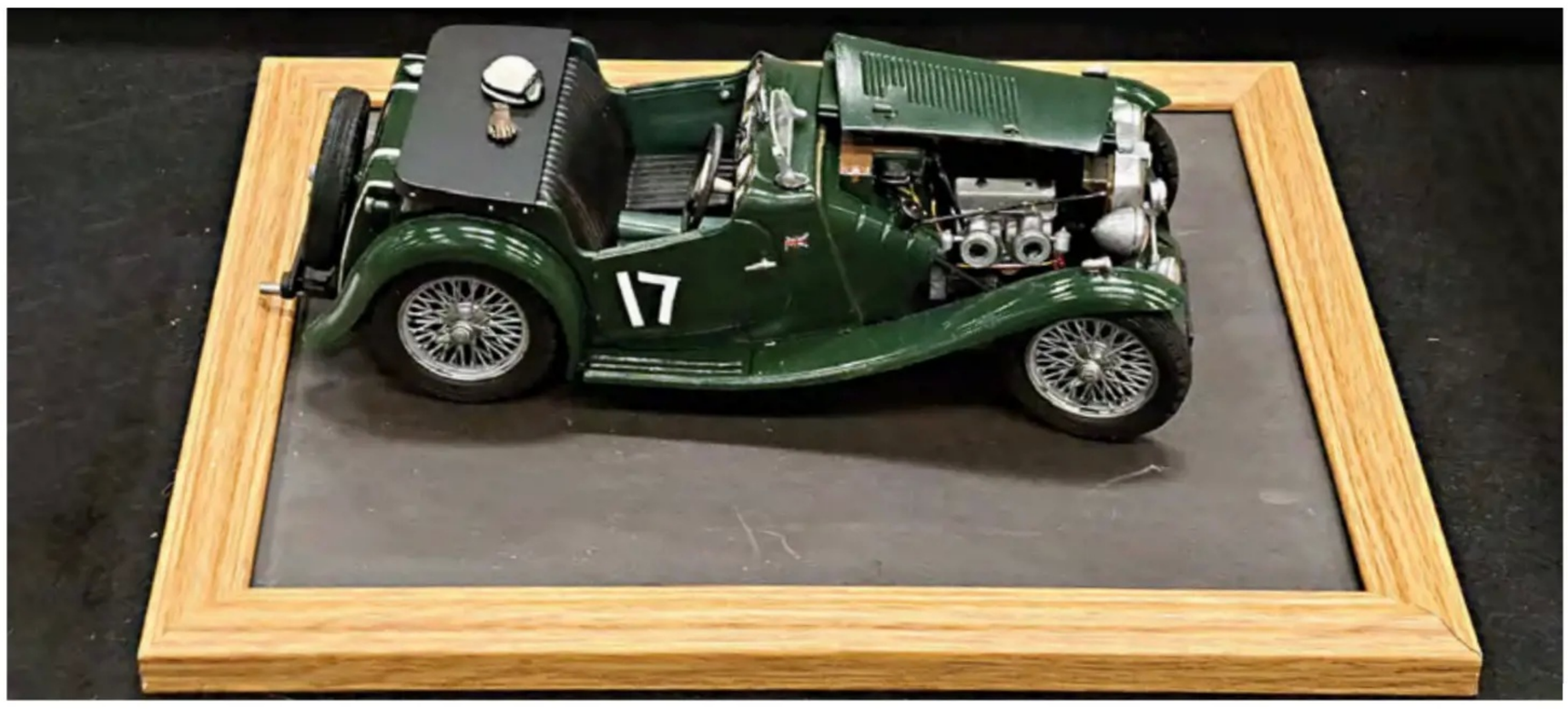
SHOW GUIDE

At-a-glance model show calendar

KEY

- Model Display
- Model Competition
- Trade Stands
- Aircraft Display
- Military Display
- Automotive Display
- Refreshments
- Free Parking
- Make 'N' Paint



South Cheshire Universal Model Show

Date:	February 22, 2026
Hosts:	South Cheshire Military Modelling Club
Address:	Malbank 6th Form College, Welsh Row, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5HD
Times:	10am-5pm
Prices:	Adults £5, OAPs £3, children £2
Email:	N/A
Web:	www.scmmc.co.uk

January 2026

25 IPMS Bolton Scale Model Show 2026

Hosts: IPMS Bolton
Address: TS Community Stadium, de Havilland Way, Bolton BL6 6JW
Prices: TBC
Times: 10am-4pm
Email: N/A
Web: Bolton IPMS (Facebook)

25 South Wales Modellers Show

Hosts: South Wales Modellers
Address: Y Pant School, Cowbridge Road, Pontyclun, Cardiff CF72 8YQ
Prices: Adults £5, accompanied under 16s and MAFVA free
Times: 10am-4pm
Email: TBC
Web: South Wales Modellers (Facebook)

February 2026

14 Morecambe Model Exhibition

Hosts: Morecambe Bay Model Club
Address: Morecambe Library, Central Drive, Morecambe LA4 5DL
Times: 9am-4pm
Prices: Free
Email: morecambebaymodelgroup@gmail.com
Web: morecambebaymodelgroup.org.uk

21 East Anglian Model Show

Hosts: Ipswich IPMS
Address: Inspire Dome, Lindbergh Road, Ipswich IP3 9QX
Times: 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £5, under 16s free
Email: ipmsipswich.show@outlook.com
Web: East Anglian Model Show (Facebook))

March 2026

1 Peterborough Scale Model Show

Hosts: Peterborough Model Club
Address: Welland Academy, Green Lane, Stamford, PE9 1HE
Times: 10am-4pm
Prices: TBC
Email: PSMC-show-secretary@outlook.com
Web: Peterborough Scale Model Club (Facebook)

7 Aldingbourne Modelex 2026

Hosts: Aldingbourne Modellers (IPMS)
Address: Aldingbourne Community Sports Centre, Olivers Meadow, Westergate, PO20 3YA
Times: 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £3, under 16s free
Email: aldingbournemodellers@gmail.com
Web: Aldingbourne Modellers (Facebook)

21 Space-Crafts Model Show

Hosts: Space-Crafts
Address: Bicester Hotel and Spa, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX26 1TH
Times: 09.30am-4.30pm
Prices: Early Bird £15, Adults £10, children £5, under 5s free
Email: info@space-crafts.co.uk
Web: https://space-crafts.co.uk

April 2026

11 Poole Vikings Scale Model Exhibition

Hosts: Poole Vikings Model Club, IPMS Dorset and BMSS
Address: Parkstone Grammar School, Sopers Lane, Poole, Dorset BH17 7EP
Times: 10am-4pm
Prices: TBC
Email: ianwithsandra@yahoo.co.uk
Web: www.poolevikingsblog.wordpress.com

12 Yeovil Model Show

Hosts: Ken Bugler
Address: Westfield Academy, Stiby Road, Yeovil BA21 3EP
Times: 10am-4pm
Prices: TBC
Email: yeovilmodelshow@gmail.com
Web: Yeovil Model Show (Facebook)

12 East Midlands Model Show

Hosts: East Midlands Model Club
Address: Hinckley Leisure Centre, Argents Mead, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 1BZ
Times: 10am-4pm
Prices: Adults £5, children £3
Email: eastmidsmodelshow@hotmail.com
Web: www.eastmidsmodelclub.co.uk

18-19 Scottish National Scale Model Show

Hosts: Scottish National Scale Model Show Team
Address: Dewars Centre, Glover Street, Perth PH2 0TH
Times: Sat: 10am-5pm, Sun: 10am-4pm
Prices: TBC
Email: gordon.short@tiscali.co.uk
Web: www.scotnats.org

25 Southdowns Model Show

Hosts: Southdowns Model Group
Address: Bohunt High School, 65a Broadwater Road, Worthing, BN14 8AH
Times: 10am-4pm
Prices: Free
Email: info@southdownsmodelgroup.co.uk
Web: Southdowns Model Group (Facebook)

Please note, all events are subject to change and cancellation. These listings are collated from various sources and are believed to be correct at the time of going to press – check with organisers prior to attendance. If you're planning a model show, please email details in the format shown to: **stuart.fone@keypublishing.com** Further information is available at: **www.KeyModelWorld.com**

NEXT MONTH

The next issue of *AMW* goes on sale in the UK on **January 15, 2026**

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Israeli Air Force F-15I Ra'am Fighter Aircraft
PKAY12217 **1:48** REISSUE

US Marines F-35B Lightning II VMFA-242 "Bats" Fighter Aircraft PKAY12592 **1:72** NEW

ran Air Force F-14A "IRIAF" Fighter Aircraft
PKAY12594 **1:72** COMING SOON

Korean Air Force E-737 "Peace Eye" Airborne Early Warning Aircraft PKAY12651 **1:144** NEW

US Air Force C-54 Skymaster Transport Aircraft
PKAY12652 **1:144** COMING SOON

US Air Force B-26B Marauder Medium Bomber
PKAY12656 **1:144** NEW

British Royal Navy Sea Harrier FRS.1 V/STOL Strike Fighter PKAY12657 **1:144** COMING SOON

German Army Panzer III Ausf N "Afrika Korps" Medium Tank PKAY13567 **1:35** NEW

German Army Tiger I Initial Production Tank 4-in-1 PKTAK02197 **1:35** COMING SOON

US Army M4A1(76w) Sherman VVSS Medium Tank Late Production PKTAK02207 **1:35** COMING SOON

Royal Navy HMS Queen Elizabeth R08 Aircraft Carrier PKTM06751 **1:700** COMING SOON

US Boeing 707-321 Pan American Passenger Aircraft PKROD338 **1:144** NEW

USAF Convair XC-99 Heavy Transport Aircraft
PKROD351 **1:144** NEW

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Messerschmitt

Bf109G-5/G-6

A17003

MESSERSCHMITT Bf109G-6/Trop
WNr.15270, Yellow 14+-, 6./JG53, Rammaca, Sicily, Early-July 1943.

MESSERSCHMITT Bf109G-6/Trop
WNr.15270, Yellow 14, 57th Fighter Group, Pachino, Sicily, Summer 1943.

MESSERSCHMITT Bf109G-6/Trop
WNr.15270, VX101, No. 1426 Flight, RAF Collyweston, England, April 1944.

MESSERSCHMITT Bf109G-6
WNr.166224, White 10+-, 4./JG3, Nogent-le-Roi, France, August 1944.

MESSERSCHMITT Bf109G-5
WNr.27119, Yellow 11+1, 9/JG54, Fw.Emil Hecker, Ludwigslust, Germany, February 1944.

Length 378mm Width 414mm Pieces 405

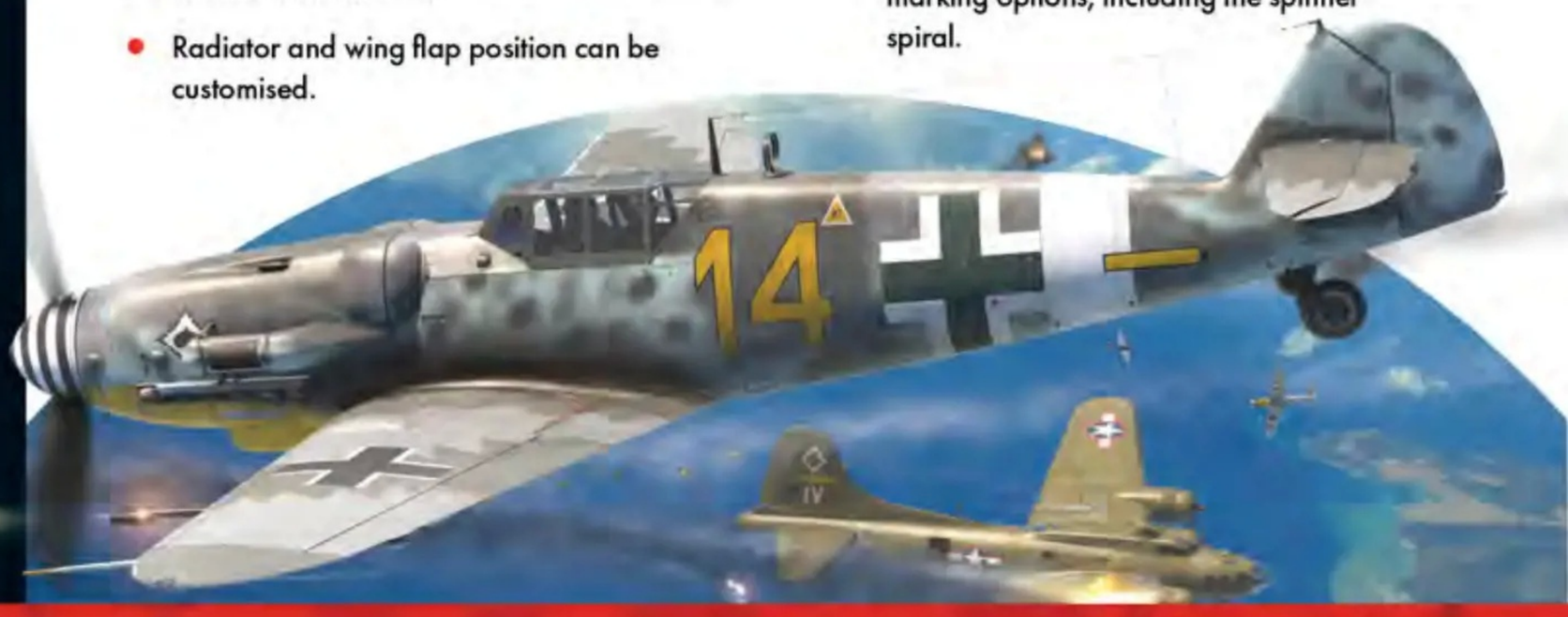
Combine with A65009 Masking Set - Messerschmitt Bf109G

This Masking Set includes masks for;

- All glazed panels for all screen and canopy options.
- Glazing internal masks (Not included in the kit).
- Tail wheel masks.
- Armoured glass panel masks

Arguably the most important Luftwaffe fighter aircraft of the Second World War, the Bf109 was designed by Professor Willy Messerschmitt. The prototype first flew in May 1935. After winning a design competition against entries from Arado, Heinkel and Focke-Wulf due to its higher speed and better manoeuvrability, it entered service as the Bf109 A-0 in 1937. Early versions were flown by the Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War, and the Luftwaffe during the Invasion of Poland.

- Model can be built with or without the fully detailed DB605 engine.
- Engine cowlings and oil cooler can be posed in open or closed postion.
- Choice of two types of engine cowlings (MTT and Erla).
- Canopy can be posed open or closed (two canopy types included).
- Additional engine and cockpit parts included for G-5 (pressurised cockpit version).
- Optional 300l fuel tank and wing cannon "Gondolas".
- Ailerons, elevators and rudder can be offset to add life to the model.
- Radiator and wing flap position can be customised.
- Many optional parts to suit specific aircraft builds, such as rudder pedals, gunsights, trim wheels, instrument panels, undercarriage wheels/tyres and windscreens Additional engine and cockpit parts included for G-5 (pressurised cockpit version).
- Detailed nose armament with machine guns, gun mounts and ammunition boxes included.
- Slide moulding used to allow the capture of fine detail on engine cowlings, fuselage, exhausts and gun barrels.
- Includes an exclusive pre-cut masking sheet covering all glazed parts and key marking options, including the spinner spiral.



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